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ON THE HISTORY
OF
Greek Literature in England,
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES
TO THE
END OF THE REIGN OF JAMES THE FIRST.

"You are an elegant Latinist, Margaret," Erasmus was pleased to say;
"but if you would drink deep of the wellsprings of Wisdom, apply to
Greece. The Latins have only shallow rivulets; the Greeks copious rivers,
running over sands of gold."—*The Household of Sir Thomas More.*

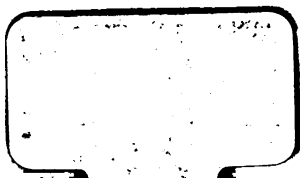
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SIR GEORGE YOUNG, B.A.
SCHOLAR OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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ON THE

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*THIS ESSAY OBTAINED THE LE BAS PRIZE IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE IN THE YEAR 1861.*

A LARGE number of Members of the Civil Service of India who were students at the East India College at Haileybury, at various intervals during the thirty years that the Rev. C. W. LE BAS, M.A. formerly Fellow of Trinity College, was connected with that Institution, desirous of testifying their regard for Mr LE BAS, and of perpetuating the memory of his services, raised a Fund which they offered to the University of Cambridge for founding an annual Prize, to be called in honour of Mr LE BAS, The *Le Bas Prize*, for the best English Essay on a subject of General Literature, such subject to be occasionally chosen with reference to the history institutions, and probable destinies and prospects of the Anglo-Indian Empire.

The Prize is subject to the following Regulations, confirmed by Grace of the Senate, Nov. 22, 1848.

1. That the LE BAS Prize shall consist of the annual interest of the above-mentioned Fund, the Essay being published at the expense of the successful Candidate.

2. That the Candidates for the Prize shall be, at the time when the subject is given out, Bachelors of

Arts under the standing of M.A.; or Students in Civil Law or Medicine of not less than four or more than seven years' standing, not being graduates in either faculty, but having kept the Exercises necessary for the degree of Bachelor of Law or Medicine.

The subject for the Essay proposed by the Vice-Chancellor for the year 1861 was:—

“On the History of Greek Literature in England,
from the Earliest Times, to the End of the
Reign of James the First.”

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GREEK LITERATURE

IN

ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

"The thoughts of men are widened with the process of the Suns."

Tennyson.

THE history of Greek Literature in England is from first to last a conflict, a tale of oppression and resistance. It comprises a period of between nine and ten centuries, dating from the establishment of a school in Kent, A.D. 670, only 74 years after the second introduction of Christianity by the mission of Austin. Its proper close is the end of the sixteenth century; when it ceased to be the acquirement of men, and became part of the education of youth. It exhibits a checkered story of ardent pursuit alternating with dreary neglect; every long continued depression exciting reaction in its favour, while again and again its course was hindered and reversed by external violence and persecution. At last it triumphed over opposition; established itself as the object of intellectual ambition, and justified its high claims by opening wide the portals of knowledge, by destroying the fences of prejudice and superstition, and guiding the minds of men to the path of advancement and discovery along which they have to this day been pressing. Since that era no decline of knowledge has thrown us back upon the traces of the past; and we

have now ceased even to fear a return of the Ages of Ignorance. Their failures were the price paid in the combat; we reap the harvest of their labours: they left us no apparent fruits, even of the most gigantic efforts, because they were engaged in a war of extermination, where success consigns to oblivion both the cause of the battle and the manner of the victory. What we have gained from the struggle is ours for ever, whether we profit by it or no; and no assault upon the foundations of our knowledge can fail to find its appropriate refutation in the armoury of ten centuries of conflict. Even if the foundations of the great deep of Barbarism were broken up once more, and waves of Asiatic or African savages could ruin the monuments of our society, we might expect them to receive from their captives the necessary impulse towards civilization long before the memory of the past had faded from the world.

The respective benefits derived from Athens and from Rome by mankind have often been discussed. We are now well accustomed to hear that from the first came the spirit of inquiry and progress; from the second that of obedience to law and respect for authority. But of these the former alone is to be ascribed to literature; the Greeks influence us by their writings, the Romans by their deeds. The real contest between them which should hold the sceptre of antiquity, only commenced when the elder was politically extinct. The first phase of it was an easy and complete victory for the literature of the subject race. Roman poetry was frozen in the bud; Roman philosophy never saw the light of day. Every development of thought in Italy found itself anticipated by a vigorous, venerable, and almost perfected predecessor. The good qualities of the Roman were shewn in the ready appreciation he gave to the Greek masterpieces. His fault, or misfortune, was

that he confined himself to imitation. Instead of studying them to find out the secret of their strength, and bringing this experience to bear on his own language and circumstances, he wasted his national springtime upon the nurture of exotic curiosities. He stood so long mumbling over those admirable lesson-books, that even in manhood he remained fettered by the same dependence upon precedent. So, like the poor scholar who spends his youth and patrimony on the classics, and is driven for livelihood to the toilsome harness of an usher, the free Roman spirit degenerated into dictionary writing and commentating upon the noble, but one-sided, originals of Greece.

At last the Roman empire was destroyed, and the Northern nations entered upon the scene. The tenants of the Temple of Light were now called to hand over its treasures to others. One gift indeed, before which all others are insignificant, they had added to the deposit; and their barbarian conquerors might thank them, if for nothing else, for Christianity. But even this by its surpassing value had increased the depreciation of the rest. To the bold exploits of the Greek on the borders of knowledge, to his accumulations of fact and fancy, they had added nothing. They had spent themselves in packing, unpacking, and repacking his merchandise, but they had not given it to the exchangers. They delivered it to their successors intact, but overlaid with bands of prejudice and authority; inventoried carefully, and labelled,—precious, but unsaleable. Within the limits of former research the acuteness of Western minds found but small scope. But they had enjoyed an educational training even shorter than that of Rome. Indeed, strictly speaking, their national mental energies had never been developed at all; the treasures of the past were spread prematurely before them, like books

before an infant; they entered on the inheritance of Idea and Method before they could discern the perfect from the imperfect, or the true from the false philosophy. Thus their literature is but a continuation of that which they received; their philosophy is another series of commentary and lexicography; their poetry, at least of the educated class, is a frigid exercise; their histories are dull chronicles or slavish compilations. Even against all disadvantages, however, the natural enterprise of man strove continually. Those who yet felt that a void space existed between the inspiration of nature and the prescription of the School were ever endeavouring to fill it, first from one side, then from the other; now by bolder speculation, now by recurrence to more ancient authority. As these were found by degrees to harmonize, the search became more animated, the opposition of ignorance more keen; at length the veil of language was rent away, and man stood face to face with all his kind had ever known, and read at last the philosophers of Greece in Greek. But the practice of resistance had added to his intellectual strength; the same impetus that brought him to the level of those mighty thinkers carried him beyond them; the same age that revealed them as a goal saw them left as the starting-point of further progress. This third stage marks the commencement of modern learning; the second is to occupy our attention in the following pages. We have to consider the demolition of the encumbrances on knowledge which the Northern races of Europe received with it from the South, and their recurrence to the old and disused mine in which the Greeks had laboured in the dark, and left glimmering with the light they had almost attained.

Although the benefits of the Revival of Learning were eclipsed by those of the Reformation of Religion which im-

mediately followed, yet in the long struggle that preceded these events much is due to the labourers for the former. In ages when no spiritual independence could raise its head, a more vulnerable side was presented in the audacious demands made upon the intellect. Attacks in this quarter did not aim so near to the heart of the evil; nor was it clearly seen that the breaking down in any point of ancient limits of speculation necessitated the refusal to allow a limit at all. No fence can be stronger than its weakest point; and in this case the weakest was but that which was least strenuously defended. Whether or not this was as well known to all rebels against school authority as we shall see that it was to some, there can be no question that the most frequent form assumed by outbreaks of spirit among scholars was that of a recurrence to the writings of Aristotle, a contempt for the translators who misrepresented and the commentators who superseded him, and an exhortation to the study of Greek, as the only road to the solution of their difficulties. As these will naturally form the sole subject of our examination at present, it is necessary to guard here against the appearance of ignoring or depreciating other phases of research. Neither would I seem to overlook the claims of great benefactors to mankind, whose names honour the countries in which they lived, if I confine my notice to the champions our own land has furnished to the cause. These limitations are involved in the necessity of conciseness and the exigencies of an essay. This country may enjoy without challenge the distinction of having preserved the study of Greek literature through a time when all the West besides abandoned it; of having disseminated it among our neighbours when lost; and after a brief period of universal darkness, of having first sounded the call to its revival. I shall have therefore

to consider first, the early ages of Greek study and the Anglo-Saxon school; secondly, the scholastic literature, so far as it was dependent on antiquity; thirdly, the rebels against the domination of the Schoolmen; fourthly, the Restoration of Learning.

CHAPTER II.

“ With the gifts of gladness
Greece did thy cradle strew;
With the tears of sadness
Greece did thy grave bedew;
With an orphan’s affection
She followed thy bier through time,
And at thy resurrection
Reappeareth, like thou, sublime.”

Ode to Freedom, in Shelley’s Hellas.

THE earliest school established in these islands for the study of the Greek language was in all probability that founded by Theodore in the latter half of the seventh century. But there are a great many stories and disquisitions to be found among English antiquaries, which point to a much earlier period, when, as they say, the knowledge of it existed here. There are some facts too which even in a more critical age have been thought to compel this belief. Such notions are best treated on the exhaustive method, by tracing as far as possible all their inferences to the original sources, and so forming for ourselves the conclusion that we think most reasonable. This may oblige us to linger for some time among obsolete traditions and fanciful hypotheses; but they will hardly be uninteresting, endeavouring as they do to flatter our pride of national ancestry; and we may be sure to

find in them much valuable information, though not that precisely which they were intended to convey.

The earliest mention that time has wafted to us of the existence of Britain is a sceptical allusion in Herodotus to the Cassiterides, islands in the West of Europe, whence tin was brought, according to the story of the traders¹. Thus on first opening our eyes to the world in history we find ourselves known by a Greek name; if at least the name as well as the knowledge of us was not derived by Herodotus from Phœnician sources². In Aristotle we find the separate titles of Albion and Ierne; the former of whom, say the monks, was son to Neptune, and flourished in the year of the world 2220. Ierne is no doubt *ἱερὰ νῆσος*, the Sacred Island, or Isle of Saints; but the similarity points rather to a common origin than to a connexion. The same name is found in the so-called Orphic verses³, and in connexion with Demetrian rites; but in classical times of Greek literature no further traces are discoverable. We must therefore reject all stories of literary proficiency founded on supposed intercourse between ancient Greece and Britain. Among later authors, Athenæus says that the masts of Ptolemy's ship were cut in our forests. But this story, copied from the Greek chronicler Moschion, contains much that is evidently fabulous. The *Periegesis* of Dionysius, highly commending the island, is said to imply acquaintance with its climate and productions⁴. But this must probably be ascribed to the

¹ Herod. θαλ. 115.

² One supposition is that the word *κασσιτερος* (Sanskrit. *kāshṭira*, from *kāsh*, to shine) was transferred by the Phœnicians from islands on the coast of India to Cornwall and the Scilly Isles. As the Greeks had no knowledge of tin except through the Phœnicians, it was no doubt an imported word. (See Liddell and Scott's *Lexicon*, from Ritter's *Erdkunde*.)

³ l. 1163.

⁴ l. 568.

time of the emperors, when the Romans had conquered the greater part of it.

We proceed to secondary testimonies; contemporary evidence clearly fails to establish anything like a literary intercourse. Cæsar, while discussing the reasons for the traditional state in which Druidical knowledge was preserved, mentions casually that for all other purposes Greek letters were employed¹. Pliny ascribes the name Druid to its Greek derivation². He also speaks of Greek monuments in the island³. Tacitus expressly asserts that Agricola caused some youths of noble birth to be instructed in the liberal arts, and set higher value on the British intellect than on the industry of Gaul⁴. His prætorship of Britain was in the year A.D. 70, and whatever studies he may have found in his province, or whatever purposes Greek letters could have been used for before his time, there is no reason to doubt that the education of the higher classes of Romans, including Greek, was attainable by the Britons under Roman sway. St Jerome⁵ mentions our seas in a rhetorical sentence, detailing the extent of Greek settlement and colonization. We conclude that, for all that is known to the contrary, there

¹ *Bell. Gall.* vi. "In reliquis fere rebus, publicis privatisque rationibus, Græcis literis utantur."

² "Roborum eligunt lucos, neque ulla sacra sine eâ fronde perficiunt; ut inde appellati quoque Græcâ interpretatione Druidæ videntur." *Nat. Hist.* xvi. last Chapter.

³ "Britannia insula, clara Græcis nostrisque monumentis." *Nat. Hist.* iv. 30.

⁴ "Tam vero principum filios liberalibus artibus erudire, et ingenia Britannorum studiis Gallorum anteferre." Tacit. *Agric.*

⁵ *Questiones Hebraice in Gen.* Most of these quotations are given in Leland's *Script Brit.*, and in Wright's *Biogr. Lit. Brit.*

may have been Grecian teachers and scholars in England soon after the Christian era.

A third branch of Græco-British antiquities is to be gathered from the palpable fictions of chroniclers and the amiable weaknesses of antiquarians. Such is the story of Bladud the Magian, his studies at Athens, and his university at Stamford, the prototype of all similar institutions¹. John of Basyng, who wrote in the thirteenth century, when complaining of the rarity of those who like him had visited Athens, guards carefully against the omission of his royal and heroic predecessor. To the same limbo of doubt we must consign the altar mentioned by Solinus, which commemorates the landing of Ulysses in Scotland². Leland even indulges in a little etymological conjecture. Two towns on the Thames, Cricklade and Lechlade, he supposes to record by their names the memory of ancient grammar schools of Greek and Latin. Unfortunately some authorities make the latter an ancient College of Physicians (or Leeches), which is at least equally probable³. We are further informed that the conductors changed the locality to Oxford, "tædio loci adfecti." The date of this migration is fixed in the reign of Uther Pendragon, to whose veracious chronicle it properly belongs. The real importance of these fables is their bearing upon the history of the time when they

¹ The authority for this tale is the *Metrical History of John Harding*, and his informant, Merlinus Caledonius.

² "In quo recessu Ulyscen Caledoniæ ad pulsum manifestat ara Græcis literis adscripta." T. Solini, *Polyhist.* xxii.

³ Leland, *Ser. Angl.* cvi. His authority is John Ross of Warwick (1480), who refers us in his turn to Davidus Tavannus or Landavensis. Some other stories of this sort may be found in Johnson's *Life of Linacre*, Chap. II.

were coined; thus, for example, we conclude that literary pilgrimages were not unheard of in the time when the tale of Bladud was invented.

Setting aside this last collection of testimony, we are left without any evidence of a peculiar inheritance in Greek literature, other than the slight assimilation of language consequent on the early Phœnician trade, which was partly inherited by the Ionians. It has however long been a question whether the resemblance between what is known of the ancient British tongue to Greek is greater than can be accounted for by its common Indo-European descent¹. Apparently we have not the means of determining this point; on the one hand, Cæsar no doubt exaggerates the use of the Greek alphabet; on the other, there are words, (such as Druid,) which seem to imply connexion².

In the beautiful legend of St Alban, which all writers combine to wish, if not to believe, genuine, the names of the judge and teacher are Greek: Asclepiodotus and Amphibalus; and it is also related of Amphibalus that he instructed his disciple in the language. Leland learnt from the annals of the Abbey of St Albans that he was a native of Wales, who after repairing to Rome for purposes of study, was expelled in the persecution of Diocletian³. In Wales he was eventually martyred. The name occurs

¹ The opinion of Leland is given as follows: "Crediderim linguam Britannicam quæ ante adventum Cæsaris partim Hebraica et Græca, partim etiam barbara fuit, quemadmodum et Gallica, longâ consuetudine redactâ in provinciam insulâ, sesquilatınam factam fuisse." XV.

² In quitting this subject, we may remark one word at least contributed in return by the British language to the later Greek: *δγασσάιος*, a gazehound. *Opp. Cyneget.* I. 471.

³ "Amphibalus—Græcæ et Latine linguae, Romanorum morem et industriam secutus, etiam puer operam dedit." XIV.

again among the Anglo-Saxon scholars of the age of Gildas; since this must have been derived from the martyr, it bears witness to the antiquity of the tradition. From the Welch monastery of Bangor came Pelagius, one of the ablest and most subtle disputants of antiquity. The effects of his defeat by Augustine and Jerome did not extend to Britain, which was largely infected by his heresy.

The death of Boethius in the fourth century is commonly fixed upon as the conclusion of the classical ages. Through the next two centuries learning declined with marvellous rapidity. To the sixth, the treatise *de Excidio Britanniae*, which bears the name of Gildas, is ascribed. If genuine, it exhibits more facility of writing than we should expect from such an age: but its tone is a lamentation over the storm of barbarism and ignorance that was raging in the land¹. Picts, Scots, and Saxons were destroying all traces of Roman civilization; the imperial power, fast crumbling by its own weight, formally resigned the onerous defence of its most distant province; and when Rome, still the centre of civilization, began to emerge from the ruins under the standard of the Papacy, the records of the state of Britain exhibit all the appalling features of barbarism: "no arts, no letters, no society; and what is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short²."

The labours and writings of Columbanus, the Evangelist of Switzerland and Eastern France, point to Ireland as the last refuge of learning in the West³. It is certain that traditions of study were long retained in these mo-

¹ The authenticity of this treatise is disputed; but I incline to place its date in the sixth century.

² Hobbes, *Leviath.* p. 62.

³ Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* Vol. I. p. 5.

nasteries; and one at least of the celebrated scholars of the ninth century, John Scotus Erigena, derives his surname from his Irish birth. But this was no fructifying light; it rather represents the embers of expiring learning, than a torch that should kindle it anew.

The year 596 A.D. is rendered memorable by the mission of Austin and the first conversion of Saxons to Christianity. At this time the surviving remnants of the Church, hid within the convents of Wales, had lost all habit of enlightened study. Their Christian life, if still doctrinally pure, was in the darkest sense Life without Light. But from this period the tide began to flow. Within fifty years after the landing of Gregory's teachers, the ground was broken up to receive seeds of knowledge. The first favourable symptom was the revival of pilgrimages to Rome. These were not undertaken solely for religious purposes. The pilgrims were commonly youths who possessed the means and inclination for travel, and were desirous of receiving education in the learned languages before taking orders in the Church. Ecclesiastics also on receiving institution to a bishopric or abbacy, resorted to Rome to obtain investiture from the pontiff in person. An English school was soon founded there for their entertainment.

The first Anglo-Saxon author, Wilfrid, Archbishop of York, owed his education to a journey of this sort. He was accompanied to Rome by Benedict, surnamed Biscop, his friend; the time of their journey is fixed in the year 653 A.D. The solicitations of the English Church, and the aptness evinced by the students in Rome, at last suggested to Pope Vitalian the idea of supplementing the mission of Austin by another, which should plant the standard of learning in Britain, as he had planted that of Christianity.

Seventy-four years after that memorable landing, an expedition left Rome which we can consider only second to it for the benefits with which it was fraught. Theodore, a native of Tarsus, and Adrian, an African, both Greeks by language, were the new apostles of learning. They were accompanied by Benedict, now a second time a visitor at Rome, in the character of Abbot of Canterbury. With self-denying liberality he resigned that station in favour of Theodore, a man conspicuous even at Rome for parts and learning, and for extensive acquaintance with literature, both sacred and profane¹. So great was the avidity with which the English seized upon the opportunities afforded them, that a complete change was effected in the national cast of mind. From a nursery of tyrants, says William of Malmesbury, Britain became the home of philosophy². Bede says that in his time there yet survived pupils of Theodore as well versed in Greek and Latin as in their native tongue³. This praise, as far as regards Greek at least, must be received with qualification.

There seems to have been an affinity of temper which especially attracted our forefathers to the study of Greek. Something perhaps of their native impatience of control led them to seek the hidden secrets of learning, before they could estimate the value of its treasures. It might be that

¹ See Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 1. Adrian is termed by William of Malmesbury "fons litterarum, rivus artium." *De Pontif.* p. 340.

² "Nisi esset usquequaque detritum libenter pergerim referre quantum lucis tunc per eos orbi Britannico infulserit; quomodo hinc Græci, hinc Latini palæstras litterarum studiis in unum contulerint, et insulam tyrannorum quondam nutriculam familiare philosophiæ domicilium effecerint." *Ibid.*

³ "Usque hodie supersunt de eorum discipulis qui Latinam Græcamque linguam æque ac propriam in quâ nati sunt norunt." Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 2.

the thinner film of Latinization which had overspread the island left them more capable than other nations of appreciating a language so different in sentiment and character from the Latin. Or perhaps it is merely to be ascribed to the excellent ambition of the race, which already exhibited itself in most of the qualities that have given a permanent reputation to its name. For "this our nation is not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore," says Milton, "the studies of learning in her deepest Sciences have bin so ancient and so eminent among us, that Writers of good antiquity and ablest judgement have been persuaded that even the school of Pythagoras and the Persian wisdom took beginning from the old Philosophy of this Iland. And that wise and civill Roman, Julius Agricola, who governed her once for Cæsar, preferred the natural wits of Britain to the laboured studies of the French¹." Certain it is, that the same age which received this importation of learning, saw it reflected eastwards upon the neighbouring continental nations. As Winfrid² carried back the Christianity of Austin to the Franks and Frisians, so did Alcuin and Erigena repay the teaching of Theodore.

Benedict, leaving Canterbury to the foreigners, established a school at Wearmouth under the auspices of King Egfrid. A valuable library was formed there with the books he had brought from Italy³. Another was founded

¹ *Areopagitica*.

² Better known under his Latin name of Boniface. He was martyred in Friesland, A. D. 755.

³ Leland, LXXXI. "*Locupletissimam ibidem bibliothecam comparatis hinc inde ex Italiâ exemplaribus cum Latinis tum Græcis posuit, Theodoro et Adriano tam sanctum opus promoventibus.*"

at York by Archbishop Egbert; both of these were rich in Latin and Greek authors. In the catalogue of the York library, which has been preserved¹, we find Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, and Chrysostom; some treatises of Aristotle, and several grammarians. That the collection was no idle folly of a bibliomaniac, but an useful fount of information, is evident from the scholars produced by it. One of the first pupils at Wearmouth was the historian Bede. The first librarian of York was Charlemagne's prime minister, Alcuin. Again, in the list of Theodore's school we find Aldhelm of Malmesbury, a scion of the royal family. He is said even to have surpassed his teachers². Among his writings we find the Greek title *Ænigmata*³; but unfortunately for the credit of the school, his style shews a melancholy incapacity to use judiciously the knowledge he had acquired. His Latin is disfigured by Greek words harshly and unnecessarily introduced; and is further stuffed and burthened with inflated ornament. No Greek composition (as might be anticipated) has descended to us, by which we might test the extravagant eulogies of his biographer⁴. William of Malmesbury,

¹ By Alcuin, in his metrical History of the Church of York:

"Illic invenies veterum vestigia Patrum,
Quidquid habet pro se Latio Romanus in orbe
Græcia vel quidquid transmisit dona Latinis
Hebraicus vel quod populus bibit imbre superno;
Africa lucifero vel quidquid lumine sparsit."

The list need not be repeated, as the quotation has been lately given by Dr Hook in his *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*.

² "Tibi pusio Græcis et Latinis eruditus literis brevi mirandus ipsis enituit magistris." William of Malmesbury, *Vit. Ald.* p. 128.

³ A MS. of this work exists in the British Museum. It is a collection of riddles, written in imitation of Symposius.

⁴ "Miro denique modo gratiæ, facundiæ, omnia idiomata sciebat, et quasi Græcus natione scriptis et verbis pronuntiabat." *Faricius in Vit. Aldh.*

a good scholar for his age, has left us a valuable estimate of Aldhelm and the school to which he belonged. "Denique Græci involutè, Romani splendide, Angli pompaticè dictare solent. Id in omnibus antiquis chartis est animadvertere, quantum quibusdam verbis abtrusis et ex Græco petitis delectentur. Moderatius tamen se agit Aldelmus, nec nisi perraro et necessario verba ponit exotica. Quem si perfectè legeris, et ex acumine Græcum putabis, et ex nitore Romanum jurabis, ex pompâ Anglum intelliges¹." It is an unsatisfactory close to all these notes of triumph to find that the chief use the Anglo-Saxons made of Greek was to corrupt their Latin; but the conviction cannot be repelled. We must be content to believe notwithstanding their "verba exotica," that the national independence of thought exhibited by them, the vigour of their love of learning, destined as it was to survive the total destruction of the school, and their wholesome discontent with the universal medium and fetter of knowledge, the Latin tongue, were not only the causes but partly also the consequences of this early immersion in the Golden Stream.

The other names recorded of the Kentish school may be passed over cursorily, since no writings ascribed to them are extant. Beretwald succeeded Theodore in the archbishopric of Canterbury. Tobias is so highly commended by Bede, that we cannot but regret the loss of his writings; especially as a later compiler, Bale, who had seen them, ventures to compare him for elegance to Demosthenes².

¹ William of Malmesbury, *Vit. Ald.* p. 339. Elsewhere he slightly varies these characteristics: "Græci involutè, Romani circumspectè, Galli splendide, Angli pompaticè dictare solent." *Hist.* p. 44.

² Leland, *LXIII.* "Beretwaldus—Tobiam consecravit, virum Latinâ Græcâ et Saxonica linguâ multipliciter instructum." See also Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* v. 8. "Cum eruditione literarum ecclesiasticarum vel generalium ita Græcam quoque cum Latinâ edidit linguam, ut tam notas ac familiares sibi eas

Ostophorus, Stephanus, Eleutherius, are instances of a fondness for Greek appellations, as prevalent among the scholars of this time as Latin names were afterwards. To Eddius Stephanus, and John, the founder of the Abbey of Beverley, the first schools in the North of England are due. The latter ordained Bede, in the year 692 A.D. At this time the future historian of his age was but nineteen; so that he must have given early evidence of his learning and piety. As he is our best authority for the proficience to which his country had attained, it is of great importance to discover the extent of his own learning. His Latin poetry is not of so high an excellence as that of Aldhelm or Alcuin; his grammatical writings shew him in a more favourable light. His opinion on the Greek tongue is worth quoting, especially as it has come down to us in a short fragment on language, of which the sequel would probably have shewn considerable knowledge. He begins, "Græca lingua inter cæteras gentium clarior habetur. Est enim et Latinis et omnibus linguis ornatio; cujus varietas in quinque partes discernitur. Quarum prima dicitur *κοινὴ*, id est, mixta sive communis, quâ omnes utuntur. Secunda Attica est, videlicet Atheniensis, quâ usi sunt omnes Græciæ auctores. Tertia Dorica, quam habent Ægyptii et Syri. Quarta Ionica. Quinta Æolica, quâ se Æolisti locutos dixerunt; et sunt in observatione Græcæ linguæ ejusmodi certa discrimina¹." We see here a satisfactory line drawn between the vulgar Greek, which was fast becoming modernized, and the Attic; the third branch

quam nativitatis suæ loquelam haberet." *Ibid.* v. 23. "Perpauca tamen habentur ejus scripta, sed Demostheneo lepore excolta." Bale, *Scrip. M. Br.* 90. But this enthusiastic Briton is often led away no less by his patriotism than by his Protestantism.

¹ See *Fragm. de Linguis Gentium*. The first page only is preserved.

included no doubt the Eastern Fathers; the fourth Homer, with whom he had some acquaintance. The mention of the Eolian dialect must have been prompted by second-hand sources. He seems to have been first among the moderns to venture upon criticism of the old grammarians¹. Nor was he altogether incompetent for the task. His great work, the *Ecclesiastical History*, is undisfigured by the Græcizing element; and this fact alone shews a better judgment in the use of acquirements than was displayed by his contemporaries. His philosophical bent is indicated by a collection of *Axiomata Philosophica*, drawn from the translations of Aristotle. His scientific works are but compilations from the ancients, but they embody all the knowledge attainable for a considerable time after him. Melancthon, a competent and impartial witness, in whose days more of his writings were extant than have come down to us, puts him even on a level with ancient writers for philosophical, mathematical, and patristic knowledge². In theology his name is better known, and claims a higher place. From his book entitled *Retractationes* it appears that he had met with a very early Greek MS. of the Acts, which he collated with the Latin text. This is supposed to be identical with the Codex Laudianus, preserved in the Bodleian library at Oxford. The peculiarity of its readings did not escape his notice. He seems to have made a list or catalogue of them, probably with a commentary³.

¹ As in his prologue to *Apocal.* v. p. 763, he professes only to follow the rules of interpretation laid down by Tychonius the Donatist, when the doctrines of his sect do not warp his judgment.

² Melancthon, *De Corr. Stud.* "Græcè et Latine haud vulgariter peritus: ad hæc in philosophiâ, mathematicis, sanctis, sic eruditus ut vetustis quoque conferri possit."

³ Bed. *Præf. in Retract.* "In quo etiam quædam quæ in Græco sive aliter seu plus aut minus posita videmus, breviter commemorare curavimus."

It is ascribed to the middle of the sixth century, and was written in Sardinia. It probably belonged to the Wearmouth collection, brought by Biscop from Italy.

The last works on which he was engaged were a collection from the Deacon Isidore, and an Anglo-Saxon translation of the Gospel of St John. It is said that when seized with his last illness, while it was evident that his death was near, he continued through the whole day dictating to his scholars, anxious to complete the task. The next day being the feast of the Ascension he resumed it early in the morning, exhorting the scribe to write diligently. All retired for the matin service. One then said to him; "Dearest Master, one chapter yet remains, and thou canst ill bear questioning." But Bede desired him to take his pen, and write hastily. At the hour of nones he made distribution of his wealth, and passed the remainder of the day in prayer and conversation. In the evening he was told that but one sentence of the work was wanting. He completed it, and died with the words of the conclusion upon his lips. This tale, related by one who stood by his side¹, sets forth worthily the end of him who bore among his fellows the revered name of Teacher of the Anglo-Saxons².

All the destruction of learning effected by the Saxons in the sixth century, was surpassed in the ninth by the ravages of the Danes. The consequence at first sight again seems to be its total extermination, requiring the same or similar extraordinary means of revival. Yet

The spirit that could venture to declare discrepancies in the Sacred text from the supposed infallibility of the Vulgate, is creditable either to Bede or to his countrymen, and probably to both.

¹ Cuthbert, *Vit. Bedæ*.

² See Alcuin, *Epist.* XIII. Vol. I. p. 22.

though Norman invasion in a second wave rolled over the land before it had recovered from the first, we find learning reviving with the return of tranquillity, and without any exotic importation. It is certain that this could not have been the case in the time of Theodore. It is true that the Norman was no such unlettered barbarian as the Saxon and the Dane, nor was the conquered race obliged to prolong a hopeless strife with his conqueror through the bare necessity of existence. Yet his social degradation was complete. That his intellect was not equally degraded we have ample proofs. He soon outstripped his masters in all those competitions which were open to them both. Within a century of the Conquest we find Saxon names predominating among the authors and ecclesiastics whose fame has been preserved.

It is necessary sometimes to anticipate the order of events, if we wish to give significance to their causes. These I think are here to be found in the dissemination of the love and means of study among the people generally, that is, the laity. Hitherto all the ambition of the scholar had centered in the Church. The statesmen of these times, Alcuin, Odo, Dunstan, were all ecclesiastics. No youth who crossed the Alps in painful pilgrimage, no acolyte in the chantries of York and Canterbury, attacked the dismal lore of Priscian or Donatus without visions of the cope and crozier, of the Papal investiture at Rome, and through it of civil power and royal tutorship in England. If his aspirations were humbler or his abilities less practical, he betook himself to the cloister cell and peaceful library, where his hours might pass in tranquillity and devotion, in adding to the cherished store by the labours of the scribe, or by the compilation of saintly biographies and ecclesiastical poetry. Monks, says Leland, were in

the eighth century almost the only learned men in Britain¹. But now another beneficial change was at work. A royal example gave the stimulus to learned pursuits among the laity. To Alfred, the gallant warrior, the judicious reformer, the conserving legislator, this further praise is due, that he first of monarchs exhorted his subjects to read and learn. The opinion after ages formed of the importance of his movement is shewn by the often repeated tradition which ascribes the first University to his fostering care². The rival foundation has meanwhile sought a more precarious antiquity in the piety of Siegfried, king of East Anglia in the sixth century; who, as Leland tells us with unwitting humour, founded the schools at Grantchester near Cambridge, and spared no expense in providing buildings, lecturers, and salaries³. But though both these gallant attempts have failed before the lance of modern criticism, the praise of Alfred does not rest upon their authenticity. In the true sense of the word, Universities, or places of education for all men, were but the mature developments of his English schools. For the laymen, for the poor, for the heathen, as well as for the wealthy and favoured ecclesiastic, their gates stood ever open; so that in idea, if not in deed, both Cambridge and Oxford are daughters of the Shepherd King.

It is hard to resist a quotation like this, though it has been often printed before: "Alfred the king greets affectionately and kindly Wulfsige his Worthy. I bid thee know, that it hath often met me in my thoughts what sort

¹ "*Monachum fuisse Felicem arbitror, quos fere solos eo tempore in Britannia doctos fuisse constat.*" Leland, cvi.

² The only authorities are an interpolation in Asser, and another in a legend of St Neot.

³ Leland, lvii.

of wise men there formerly were throughout the English nation, as well of the spiritual degree as of Laymen. Therefore I bid thee do as I believe thou wilt, bestow the wisdom which God gave thee whenever thou mayest." After describing the ignorance of the times,—“Therefore it appears to me good, if thou agree with me, that we also translate some books which seem most needful for all to understand into that language which all can understand, and cause, as with God's help we very easily may, that all the youth that is now in the English nation of free men, such as are able to maintain themselves, be put to learning while they can employ themselves on nothing else, till they can at least read well the English tongue¹.” Would that something of the faith which inspired these lines could nerve all the efforts of modern educators and reformers, that we also might in our day accomplish what “with God's help we very easily may”!

Alfred knew no Greek; our notice of him must therefore be no further extended; it would be altogether irrelevant, but for the necessary connexion between an advance in general enlightenment, and a new development of Greek study. The English school at Rome, revived by his father Ethelwolf, was relieved by Pope Marinus from taxes at his intercession. Asser, Plegmund, Grimbald, John of Corvei and others surrounded and graced his throne: but their attainments did not apparently extend beyond Latin and divinity. At this period Fridegode, a monk of Dover, executed a life of Wilfrid: the perpetual occurrence of

¹ From the preface to the translation of Gregory's *Pastorale*, a copy of which was sent to all Alfred's bishops. His immediate successors were also patrons of learning. To his son Edward is attributed the restoration of Cambridge when destroyed, as the chronicler guessed it must have been, by the Danes. (Ralph Higden of Chester, and John Ross of Warwick, quoted in Leland, cxvi.)

Greek words shews that this old fashion had reached a preposterous height. The severe criticism applied by William of Malmesbury may be extended to most writings of the age: "Hanc quidem præter Sibyllam leget nemo¹."

The early part of the ninth century is denominated by Mr Wright the Age of Glosses². In this period Greek study declined, the current having for the present set towards the vernacular tongue. It had now become necessary either from the decay of knowledge, or possibly from the more general use of books, to explain the Græcisms with which the disciples of Theodore had overloaded their style. The work most freely annotated in this way is Aldhelm's treatise *de Laude Virginitatis*. A MS. of this or the preceding century, containing the Lord's Prayer in Greek, but written in the Anglo-Saxon character, is preserved in the British Museum; it is perhaps the earliest document now extant in that language which this country produced³. In an Anglo-Saxon MS. of this time a list of national characteristics is introduced, ascribing wisdom to the Greeks, pride to the Romans, anger to the Britons, and folly to the Saxons themselves. This shews us the relative position assigned by the writer to the Greek works in his hands. Aristotle, the Fathers, and the Grammarians must divide the tribute; and possibly a claim may be reserved for Homer, whom Bede quotes as an authority on quantity, apparently as though familiar with him⁴. From some pas-

¹ "Latinitatem perosus Græcitatē amat, Græcula verba frequentat, ut merito dictis ejus aptetur illud Plautinum, &c." *De Pont.* p. 200.

² See Preface to *Biogr. Literaria*.

³ Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* i. 89.

⁴ *De Arte Metrica*, Op. Vol. i. p. 27. Bede says of the lengthening of a short syllable ending in a consonant before a vowel in the next word, "apud Virgilium rarissimum, apud Homerum vero frequentissimum repariatur." Also in p. 4, "Cœnon est, vel micton." Of the kinds of poetry,

sages in Alfred and in French writers of later date, it seems probable that his works were read in the Schools up to the time when all study was monopolized by the Aristotelian philosophy¹. But the period of the Conquest, at which we now arrive, is a dismal one for learning; nor within two centuries before and after it do we find more than one name on which to rest with satisfaction. The exception is John Scotus Erigena, to whom notice is due as the culminating point and conclusion of this part of our subject.

He flourished in the middle of the ninth century. As his name indicates, he was a native of Ireland; but we have no earlier information of his career than his settlement at the court of France. He was invited thither and greatly honoured by Charles le Chauve, by whose desire he made a translation of the works (so called) of Dionysius the Areopagite. This was published about the year 867 A.D. In the preface we find a copy of elegiacs, claiming for the author the honour of introducing the Greek language to his contemporaries:

Hanc libam, sacro Græcorum nectare fartam
 Advena Johannes spendo meo Carolo...
 Vos qui Romuleas nescitis temnere chartas,
 Attica ne pigeat sumere gymnasia.
 Quorum si quædam per me scintilla relucet
 Usibus Ausoniis, si libet, aspiciate...
 Si quid nodosum durumve notetur in ipso,
 Parcite; Cecropidis Attica tela sequor.

It is probably from a misunderstanding of these extracts

"in quo poeta ipse loquitur et personæ loquentes introducuntur; ut superscripta Iliades et Odyssea Homeri et apud nos historia beati Job, et Eneis Virgilio."

¹ See Wright, *Pref. Biog. Lit.*, with whom, however, Hallam disagrees. *Lit. Eur.* i. 89, note.

that he was said to have studied at Athens, which is not credible. A passage in a letter written by Anastasius to King Charles, complaining of the audacity with which a remote barbarian ventures to understand and translate such works, shews us that the learning which prompted it was acquired in his own land¹. The pope, Nicolas I, threatened the king, for allowing its publication without previous submission to the Papal censor; and since Dionysius himself was held unexceptionably orthodox, the displeasure of authority fell heavily upon the obscurity and inadequacy of the translation. An original work on physics, written by Erigena, bears the Greek title *Περὶ φύσεως μερισμοῦ*. He also translated the Greek scholia of Maximus on Gregory Nazianzen. We must reject the stories according to which he spent the last twelve years of his life in England, and the fable of his murder by the penknives of his scholars at Malmesbury. They arise partly from the hatred of other schools, and partly from confounding his name with John of Corvei, or of Saxony, one of Alfred's foreign chaplains, usually associated in legend with Grimbold. He died no doubt where he had lived, in France.

He is sometimes called the founder of the Realistic or Earlier School Philosophy. His writings exhibit a mystic tendency, derived from the Alexandrian fathers to whom his studies were directed; but this designation is a mistake. The School Philosophy is one by itself, and hardly admits of division, except where two champions stand forward in express opposition to each other. If we wish to assign

¹ "Mirandum est quoque si vir ille barbarus qui in finibus mundi positus (quanto ab hominibus conversatione tanto credi potuit alterius linguae dictione longinquius), talia intellectu capere aliamque in linguam transferre valuerit." Anastasius to Charles the Bald, Usher's *Epist. Hib.* 55.

Erigena a place among thinkers, it must be with the Alexandrian or Neo-Platonic School; for his sphere lay wholly among their dreamy speculations. He was antiquarian in his tendency of thought, and a scholar rather than a philosopher.

One work ascribed to him possesses a peculiar interest in philological history. This is the *Excerpta de Differentiis et Societatibus Græci Latinique verbi*, usually printed with the writings of Macrobius. The full title in the Parisian MS. is as follows: "Explicuit defloratio de libro Ambrosii Macrobiani Theodosii, quam Johannes carpserat ad discendas Græcorum verborum regulas." To this is appended in a later hand the suggestion that Johannes may be John of Basyng, who flourished in the end of the thirteenth century. But the document itself has the outward character of the eleventh Pithæus, who owned it when first printed, suggested Erigena for the author; and this conjecture has generally been adopted. Stephanus, in the preface to the first edition of Macrobius, supports his claim; a later editor, in his enthusiasm for Macrobius himself, will not allow the later writer even a knowledge of Greek¹. However, in another place, he calls it "rather a compilation than a selection, which supplies the place of the original so well, that we need not deplore the loss of it²." Until therefore it has been proved that some other scholar of this early period possessed sufficient attainments to produce such a treatise, we may fairly assign it to the one whose capacity is indisputable. It contains a paradigm of the verb *ποιῶ* at the

¹ Macrobius, edited by Janus, Quædlinb. and Leips. 1848. See his *Prolegomena*, IV. 2.

² Ibid. *Prolegomena*, II. 2. We know that Erigena resided at Paris, where the MS. is found. John of Basyng's books were all deposited at Oxford: if not Erigena, it must be some French author, but none has been suggested.

conclusion, which he calls τὸ ῥῆμα ἐνεργητικὸν τῆς ὀριστικῆς ἐγκλίσεως κατὰ πρῶτην τὴν συζυγίαν περισπωμένων. In this the aorist is omitted, because there is no Latin tense corresponding to it¹; also the participles, which were considered a distinct part of speech. He further draws a distinction between the subjunctive and optative moods in Latin, in order that they may more accurately correspond with the Greek. Some of these peculiarities may be due to the compiler. It seems to me, from the specimens I have given of its contents, that the object of the work was to help scholars to comprehend the formation of the Latin conjugation, and that no readers were anticipated who would desire to study the Greek verb for its own sake. We cannot therefore consider it as the introduction to a new study; it is rather an illustration of the old, drawn by one who had penetrated to the outlying regions of comparative philology.

Ingulph, Abbot of Croyland, by birth an Englishman, flourishing in the end of the eleventh century, is the subject of a very remarkable autobiography, which though now regarded as spurious² may be taken as authority for the generally received notions of the state of learning in this age held by the writer and his contemporaries; and whoever these may be, they clearly had access to sources of information from which we are debarred. It was the interest of a monk of the middle ages to exaggerate the learning and virtues of his predecessors in the same convent or order; hence all eulogies proceeding from the mo-

¹ See Section VII.: "Ideo prætermittimus, quia eo Latinitas caret." It is doubtful whether Macrobius is really the author of the original treatise. The speculations on the subject may be found in the edition referred to, but no other author has been yet suggested in any way probable.

² First proved so by the late Sir F. Palgrave.

nastic biographers must be received with caution. At the same time so small (fortunately for us) was their power of imagination and invention, that what they say may generally be received as fact, derived either from a previous chronicler, or from their own personal experience. Sometimes the narrative rises into a wild vein of fiction and exaggeration; shewing where the enthusiasm of the writer's faith has surpassed the limits imposed by the narrowness of his understanding; but these flights are easily distinguishable from the sober language in which he records the convent routine around him, or the musty traditions of his authority. With this reservation, it may not be irrelevant to our purpose to give some glimpse into these ancient but discredited histories.

Ingulph then, or his admirer, says, that he was educated at Westminster and Oxford, both of which were certainly sites of schools founded by Alfred or his successors, and resorted to by students, though in diminished numbers, throughout the disastrous troubles of the tenth century. There, he tells us, he made greater proficiency in Aristotle than many of his own age. Afterwards he studied Tully's *Rhetoric*. We may therefore conclude that a translation of Aristotle is intended; and this points to a later period than the Conquest, when the Latin versions of Greek works had quite superseded the originals. In 1064 A.D. he joined an expedition of seven thousand pilgrims to Jerusalem; an event not improbable in itself, under the pious rule of the Confessor; though the numbers of the caravans may be exaggerated. He was received by Alexis at Constantinople; but since that emperor did not commence his reign till 1081, this allusion is fairly appealed to by the critics as evidence of the fictitious authenticity of the work. In 1075

he became Abbot of Croyland¹, which after the suppression of Oxford at the Conquest, (for this we may read, after the general decline of the Anglo-Saxon schools,) became under Norman patronage the most celebrated place of education in England. He died in 1109.

A yet more interesting account is found in the continuation to the life of Ingulph, attributed to Peter of Blois; which carries down the history of the Abbey to about the year 1200. This is also given up as spurious²; but though not the work of that versatile and accomplished writer, to whom it seems only to have been attributed in default of certain knowledge as the most worthy, it probably embodies traditions of the Abbey not wholly devoid of foundation. We read that Joffrid, the successor of Ingulph, removed the school from Croyland to Cottenham on account of the unhealthiness of the place. We have met with this tradition of removal before: no doubt the poverty and crowded dwellings of the poorer students caused every place endowed with a school in those days to be considered in its turn unhealthy. At Cottenham it was at first held in a large barn; the forms of discipline were copied from the school of Blois³. Early in the morning Brother Odo lectured in grammar. At noon Terricus explained Aristotle to the advanced students, with the comments of Porphyrius and Averroes⁴. Brother William expounded Cicero and Quintilian in the afternoon. On

¹ Croyland Abbey was founded in 714 by Guthlac, of whom a life by Felix the monk, mentioned above, p. 22, note, of the date 950 or thereabouts, is extant.

² See Wright's *Biographia Literaria*, Pref.

³ This may have suggested Peter of Blois as the author.

⁴ Averroes died in 1206. Time being allowed for the circulation of his works, they could not have been in use till a later period.

Sundays and holidays Gislebert preached in the neighbouring churches for the confutation and conversion of the Jews. This lively account, reading more like the notices on a Hall-screen of the present day than a monkish chronicle of the 13th century, is perhaps too doubtfully authenticated to be considered as a fact. At the same time it presents with considerable exactness the necessary habits and condition of a university without buildings, funds, press or library; and such these ancient lecture-rooms must have been.

One monarch of the Norman race has won at least a name for learning; Henry I. surnamed by his biographers Beauclerc. It is hard to say on what this reputation was founded; some "laws" are the only things ascribed to his hand, and they seem to have been rules for the regulation of his household. He is said by the editor of some later Athenæ to have graduated at Cambridge. Oxford claims the same royal disciple; we are not informed whether this was an admission "*ad eundem Gradum*." The really great names belonging to the 11th century are those of Lanfranc and his pupil Anselm, the only acquisitions to learning drawn by this country from the Norman invasion. Of these the former was an able administrator, and by account, an eloquent disputer; his writings are unimportant. Anselm, a name as much exalted in his own time as depreciated by later ages, has again been elevated to the position of a landmark in the shifting wastes of Time. His metaphysical powers appear great even when known only by extracts and at second-hand; those who have studied his writings make use of them as representatives of the speculative theology in fashion at this period¹. The

¹ See especially Mansel's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 7, and notes. Anselm was born 1033, and died 1109 A.D.

great controversies of the age concerning transubstantiation and the determination of Easter absorbed too much of his intellect; and worse results than even the waste of such abilities followed upon these distracting quarrels. They coloured all forms of discussion with the stain of unwholesome dogmatism, they continually added to the mass of infallible decisions which the inquirer after truth was forced blindly and unreasonably to receive, and finally monopolized the whole province of education. Even the bitter dispute with the Greek church, which ended in the great and final schism between the East and West, did not serve to introduce any knowledge of Greek language or Greek thought to the Latin writers; for confident in their own infallibility they disregarded as irrelevant the answers of their adversaries, and levelled even their refutations at shadowy creations of their own.

Thus amid bigotry and violence the opening mind of the West took definitely the wrong path to knowledge, and abandoned the toilsome though rightly directed efforts of its infancy. After four centuries of fruitless labour we shall find it recurring to its former track; but mean time what giants of intellect, what golden opportunities, were lost for ever! What costly treasures were sacrificed to these idols of study, the theatre, and the herd! It was not that the controversies we have alluded to were all intrinsically trivial; one at least was the turning-point in after years of a greater and more honourable struggle; but the way in which men approached the task, the spirit with which they fought, the object they hoped to gain, these were the matters in which they erred. They began instead of ending with the authority of law; they maintained it with intolerance, sometimes with fanaticism; they aimed at their own glory beneath the name of the holiest of

causes. Thus under pretext of the advancement of Religion, they crushed their fellow-men with a barbarous, stupid and inquisitorial tyranny. Nor was it until Learning had claimed again her lawful place and broken the bands of Ignorance, that Religion vindicated her fame and was seated in her empire of light again,

Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis.

It is now time to turn from the extinct embers of the pre-Norman scholarship to the substitute received by England from the continent. Here again she outstripped her teachers in their own province; and, which is a subject for greater pride, she was the first to protest against its narrowness and inutility.

CHAPTER III.

"This low man, with a little thing to do,
Sees it, and does it.
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies, ere he knows it.
That, has the world's good; if he need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This throws himself on God, and unperplexed,
Seeking, shall find Him."

ROBERT BROWNING.

NOTHING in all the marvels of past history is so astonishing to us, when we try to epitomize the revolutions and development of thought, as the great mass of speculation and learning contained in folios of the Schoolmen. Nothing perhaps is more perplexing to the historians of philosophy than the impossibility of giving any notion, by an epitome, of the phases through which the human race was then passing. The inevitable result of it is to convey, to the reader desirous of appreciating the spirit of that age, the most profound contempt of the Schoolmen, the schools, and the scholastic philosophy. We know, from our faith in those who have ventured on the dreary desert, that such contempt is ill bestowed. We cannot but accede to the commendations, earnestly enforced, of the acuteness, subtilty, and depth of their understanding. We can

more easily appreciate their occasional independence and honesty; above all, their faith in their work and teaching. But with the pile of folios the list of their achievements has an end; when we look for the result in history, we find none. We see the whole fabric suddenly overshadowed by another growth, a vigorous and apparently opposite tendency of thought, which has risen, reached maturity, and produced its fruit; and has left us no room for recollection or regret over those masses of forgotten learning. It is like some huge edifice in a growing city, slowly completed with the labour of years, and destined for a mansion and emporium of commerce; which is no sooner finished, but the swarming streets and multiplying habitations occupy the soil around, and build it out of view and almost out of mind, so that it stands ever desolate in the recesses of court and alley, unsuitable for dwelling and inaccessible to trade. The popular consolation for the expenditure of so much mental labour is founded on the mental discipline it entailed. But from our knowledge of the preceding ages we can hardly venture to say that such discipline was required. We are hardly justified in condemning for extravagance the first developments of the Teutonic mind. Nor can we rest on analogy between national and individual training when trying to find a place in our system for the Schoolmen; we can but attempt to enter somewhat into the difficulties and influences of their times, to stand as far as possible on their standing ground, and to look through their eyes at the problems they attempted to solve.

We see then a double chain of interest winding all through the mazes of this dreary time. The stronger and more brilliant is the Aristotelian logic, the embodiment of the mind of the age, which ends abruptly, like threads

dropped in a web, about the middle of the sixteenth century. The other is that rare and scattered band of earnest inquirers who revived from time to time a longing after deeper wisdom, and sought it, some in the old languages whence all they knew had been derived, some in the secrets of Nature, and some in the abstractions of pure science. Little indeed could these men effect, fighting single-handed against the power of the Church and School; but in spite of failure, we who have entered into their labours must reverence the men whose errors have guided us right. Believing then that the contribution of the Scholastic Philosophy towards the enlightenment of our race was uncertain and inadequate, and that even in its best period there were some who saw this as we do, and sought the remedy that has since been found, I venture to pursue these two parallel histories,—tracing in the former the Greek element which gave it form but failed to impart its own virtue; in the second, enumerating the attempts made to regain the same ancient source by men who sought to draw from it a more profitable inspiration.

When the new races issuing from the North had supplanted the nations that dwelt about the Mediterranean in the leadership of mankind; when the instinct of progress, after circulating half round the central sea, had finally quitted it for a wider and more glorious dominion, and that great mass of human material began to receive into its nostrils the breath of life and to become a living Soul; the questions that disturbed the brains of the young Grecian philosophy did not present themselves in the same form as of old. These tribes were rather educated like the English infant, who gathers lessons in things spiritual at his mother's knee long before he can frame a doubt or recognize a difficulty in the problem of his being. It

was to the defence and perfecting of their nursery faith, unreasoning, but not irrational, that the weapons forged by the Greek in his unaided battle with Chaos and old Night were brought. When the subtle heathen turned his arts of logic upon the Christian faith, the champions of truth had wrested them from his cause, and employed them, though after long hesitation, in their own. When again the meditative saint was borne by habit away from the chances and changes of the world into the airy region of the Ideal, he seized upon the gorgeous forms and language of the Platonist to elevate his conception of the Christian scheme¹. Vague and futile as these adaptations were, with all their faults and merits heaped together confusedly in the jumble of decaying language and transitional thought, they were all the legacies of the past to the children of the coming age. What the Roman of the Christian Empire gave them, that was all they could receive. The Providence which spread his language far and wide among the Celtic and Teutonic tribes, giving with his religion the bulwarks he had reared about it, denied them use of the treasures which were still locked in the Grecian tongue. Their untamed energy of mind awoke in fetters, and grew to manhood without the custom of liberty. Beneath a rigid yoke of authority, within the narrow pale of orthodoxy, the speculators of the middle ages performed such

¹ "This same unprofitable subtilty or curiosity is of two sorts; either in the subject itself that they" (the Schoolmen) "handle, when it is a fruitless speculation or controversy, whereof there are no small number in Divinity or Philosophy; or in the manner or method of handling a knowledge, which amongst them was this; upon every particular position or assertion to frame objections, and to those objections, solutions; which solutions were for the most part not confutations, but distinctions; whereas indeed the strength of all sciences is as the strength of the old man's faggot, in the band." Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*.

gigantic feats of reasoning, shewed such marvellous subtilty of understanding, as to impress us with great wonder at the energy of the race. Had they been free to roam without check from theory to theory, to follow into other worlds the guidance of the master spirits of Greece, we can hardly guess at the result; but we may perhaps ascribe the preservation of our Faith through the giddiness of their childhood, to the childlike docility with which they held it fast. What creed and council declared, that was the axiom; what Aristotle and his interpreters elaborated, that was the demonstration. Was there an aspiring spirit, who sought to approach nearer to the mirror in which the invisible was darkly seen? His guide was the Platonist father, like Dionysius, to whose study he might by long toil in language attain. Was there a formidable assault upon the citadel of truth? the audacious heretic might be confuted in due form, with syllogism and category; and while the narrow limits of logic were sown and reaped over and over again, the thirst for originality satiated itself in the infinite divisibility of which all propositions couched in language may be made capable. Now this was clearly the easier and more tempting study; in the arid mysticism of Alexandria novelty was dangerous and conformity impossible; but in the technicalities of the Aristotelian there was an endless field of doubts and solutions, of oppositions and confutations, of division and distinction, in which fame might be acquired and subtilty satisfied, without the toil of ungenial study or the risk of exciting persecution.

Boethius, ultimus Latinorum, portioned out the province of reason into four great divisions; sciences, as he termed them, of magnitude absolute and relative, stationary and moveable; that is to say, Arithmetic, Music, Geome-

try and Astronomy. Adopting this definition, the pretentious exhaustiveness of which commended it to their rude understandings, the earliest doctors ordained the famous Quadrivium or fourfold path of wisdom, in which the teaching of the schools should move. The preparation for philosophy, following out the same idea, was divided into Logic, Rhetoric, and Grammar. These were the studies of the undergraduate course in the Universities; but success was placed avowedly in the attainment of eloquence, which should qualify for the office of a teacher. We see in this the traces of an educational mistake not peculiar to that age; the supposing that since a regular method of speculation is more likely to give a true result than the licence of an instinctive faculty, the first thing necessary to be learned is the rule of speech and the laws of thought. The error, which only experience could remedy, lay in the incapacity of the opening mind to receive that vast bundle of technicalities and digest them into working order without raw material on which to work. Logic, more or less, is instinctive in every man; more than this he will evolve for himself, as the reason nerves itself to grapple with its task. But the provident construction in every student's head of a vast grinding mill of words and method, standing idle at the most active period of life for want of material to employ it, could only result in idolatry of the instrument and degradation of its destined work. It was found, as it is found at this day, that those who have attained distinction in youthful studies will not consent to place themselves once more on a level with the men they have outstripped, in the faith of superior attainments which may be converted they know not how to the new study. Or if they do, the powers under their command treat the new subjects as theatres for their display, not

as battle-fields for their toil and use. The Quadrivium was stunted by its younger rival; the Organon superseded the First Philosophy; the Aristotelian dialectic supplanted the Platonic; Science gave place to Rhetoric. Hence the singular features of this age; its triviality, its hairsplitting, its blank and bewildering aimlessness. Hence it is that many folios of reasoning on the truths even of Christianity or the positions of philosophy, have no more interest for the reader than the solutions of a Chinese puzzle.

The same author, marked out by his age and faith as the most trustworthy guide among the ancients, had sketched a plan for the translation of Greek philosophy entire into the Latin tongue. Only one fragment of Aristotle's system had been completely translated by the designer; but this specimen, together with their own sympathies, led men to knock first at the portal of the mighty Stagirite. Strenuous were the efforts made at first to penetrate the mysteries of Greek; they might in time have been successful, had not a substitute been found, in the Arabian translations imported by the Saracens into Spain. It is an uncertain point if these were primarily from the Greek, or whether Persian¹ and Syrian hands may not have intervened; they were necessarily imperfect and corrupt exponents of the original, owing their existence rather to the veneration than the learning of the translators. A source of new error was the hatred in which every thing Mahometan was held by the Jews, who were prevailed upon for hire to translate Avicenna, Averroes, and others, into the universal medium, the Latin tongue. We may

¹ Damascius and Simplicius, the last Athenian philosophers, were received by Chosroes in Persia, after the closing of the Athenian schools by Justinian. Avicenna lived at Bagdad. Moses Maimonides, the Jew, was a disciple of Averroes in the West.

well conceive that after such rude and questionable handling, little remained of the perspicuity and good sense of the old philosopher. Nor was there much compensation in the immense masses of oriental commentary which clung like parasitical weed to the recovered treasure. So deeply was the evil felt, that we shall find the most intelligent reformers of learning exhorting as the first step to improvement not a more liberal admission of other Grecian schools, far less an independent spirit of inquiry, but an examination by competent hands of the original Aristotle, and a correction of the faulty versions which had superseded him.

These features, of implicit submission to authority and inability or disinclination to amend it, are common to all the leaders of this period, both Realists and Nominalists. If these last have obtained a name for freer speculation and bolder championship of truth, it is through the great theological reformation of the succeeding age, the authors of which sought among the more unfashionable schoolmen for precedents to innovations of which these neither spoke nor dreamt. The Realists on the other hand, in so far as they adopted the Platonic language, might claim closer relationship to Greek philosophy than their opponents; were it not that the parts they valued highest were the additions made to Platonism by its Alexandrian adulterators. For instance, the Platonizing Christian converted the ideas of Plato into patterns or forms, existing prior to all creation in the mind of the Creator, and viewed solely in their relation to Him. Thus one essential part of the Platonic scheme, the participation and communion of the reason with these its objects, was omitted. The next step was to confine our knowledge of them to the positive truths of revealed religion; and the immediate

consequence of this, still further to limit it to the interpretations given by authority, the Fathers, the Synods, the Master of Sentences, or whatever other oracle might be sheltered under that convenient formula, The Church.

So far then as our present subject is concerned, this chapter may be summed up in a few words. The Philosophy of Aquinas Scotus and Occham was indeed founded on the same base as all the best efforts of human reason, then or since; on the Greek theories and methods. But in as much as its end was different from theirs: as these modern speculators held that the problems which perplexed their predecessors were already solved, and that the sole duty of man was to defend that which had been given him from without, they resolutely shut their eyes to the possibility of an error in their own standing-ground. They hired the auxiliaries with which the Titans of Greece had striven to scale the heavens, and employed them to defend a narrower heaven of their own. And a hireling service was all they could obtain; as soon as men arose to attack, not Aquinas's bristling front of logic and objection, but the very postulates of argument, Peter Lombard and the dogmatic theology, the yoke of the Schoolmen was broken for ever.

Those who during this unpromising tyranny continued to insist upon the necessity of adding to the world's stock of knowledge, before man, complete and perfect, could devote his powers to the refutation of all novelty; who believed that there yet was a work for the Ages to do beyond the confutation of mad or miserable heretics, and that humanity, educated, elevated, and purified by the Faith, was no meaner instrument in the cause of wisdom than when groping in darkness unaided from above; and in this belief advocated a return to the old fount of wis-

dom which the flood of Christianity had not overwhelmed or hid; who spent their youth in long pilgrimages and toilsome researches after the mystic repositories of vellum, which they knew would benefit, not them, but their children's children; and their age in poring over the crabbed characters of Syrian and Byzantine penmen; these few and solitary labourers, to whom posterity still owes the praise their own age refused to give, will offer a more congenial province to the essayist, and perhaps a more lively interest to the reader.

CHAPTER IV.

Χαίρετε, κήρυκες, Διὸς ἀγγελοι ἡδὲ καὶ ἀνθρώων.

BACON, from HOMER.

A PILGRIM to the East in the beginning of the twelfth century, by name Athelard, who explored some parts of Greece and Asia Minor in his way to Jerusalem, has left us a short tract "De Eodem et Diverso," on the model of Prodicus' Choice of Hercules. He brought with him from Arabia a translation of the Elements of Euclid into Latin, which may probably have been his own work. For this alone he deserves mention and honour in the West, for it does not appear that the sages of the land had made any previous acquaintance with the Greek geometry. A more direct attack upon the studies of the age may be found in his *Quæstiones Naturales*, a supposed dialogue between himself and his nephew, written apparently in some apprehension of the consequences of publicity, and destined only for the eye of the other interlocutor. In this he boldly attacks the universal deference paid to authority, and denominates it "a muzzle" to all honest inquiry¹.

¹ "De animalibus difficilis est mea tecum disertatio. Ego enim aliud a magistris Arabicis, ratione duce, didici, tu vero aliud auctoritatis picturæ captus capistrum sequeris. Quid enim aliud auctoritas dicenda est, quam capistrum?" Athel. *Quæst. Nat.*

He was followed by Robert of Retines, whose efforts were also chiefly directed to the importation of scientific knowledge. This traveller formed a friendship in the East with Hermann the Dalmatian, with whom he studied the Arabian writers. Afterwards in Spain he translated Ptolemy on the Planisphere from the Arabic; and his version of the Koran might give some ground for the jealousy which such studies began to excite.

John of Salisbury, a man preeminently learned among the early schoolmen, discussed the ancient philosophies with considerable care. He gives the preference to the academic school, which seems to imply that he drew his knowledge from Cicero. Hallam has remarked the prevalence of Greek titles among his works, which seems to have been a taste of the times; in the *Metalogicus* there is a remarkable passage complaining of the neglect of Aristotle's logical treatises, for the sake of the commentaries. He died in 1180.

Peter of Blois appears from the occasional use of words to have had some knowledge of Greek. He aspired in youth to the character of a universal genius: and since the time of Bede, no one had a better claim to be so considered; but in later years, giving way to a singular melancholy, he abandoned all secular learning, and devoted himself to ecclesiastical pursuits. His letters contain much interest, both of style and matter.

Benoit de Saint Maur, a Benedictine monk, paraphrased (through a translation) the fictitious poem of Dares the Phrygian on Homer and his times. The popular opinion of Homer, as given in this work, is remarkable:

Omer qui fu clers merveilleux
Et sages, et esciantrous,

Écrit de la destruction
 Del grand siege de l'oquoison,
 Par coi Troie fut desertee
 Donque puis ne fu habitee.

He goes on to say, that as Homer lived at least one hundred years after the great siege, he cannot be entirely depended on for accuracy: and falls into a curious narrative of some contest at Athens, out of which Homer came victorious, and obtained credit which was not entirely his due¹. It is clear that Homer was but a memory of past times in the schools of the Benedictines, the most learned class now existing: but it seems that he could not have been long abandoned as a book of education.

Alexander Neckam, who flourished at the close of the twelfth century, was in many respects a remarkable man. Besides commentaries on Aristotle, he wrote books with the following titles: *Isagogicum de Grammaticâ*; *Corrogationes de tropis et figuris*; *Repertorium Vocabulorum*; *Distinctiones Verborum*; *De accentu in mediis syllabis*: these have never been printed. He seems to belong to the old school of Anglo-Saxon times, before grammar and the science of language was abandoned for its logistic abuse.

At this time Latin was well understood and spoken among all educated men: not of course the knights and crusaders, the gentry of the feudal system, but the other aristocracy, of the convent and the church. Greek was yet a living tongue: the Crusades had brought the knowledge of it to Europe, and it was known that even Aristotle could be read in the original at Constantinople. Translations by Michael Scott, William Fleming, Gerard of Cre-

¹ The quotation is given entire in Wright, *Biogr. Lit.* Another opinion of this age was, that Virgil was a contemporary, or nearly, of Homer.

mona, Hermann of Dalmatia, Alfred of England, are mentioned by a contemporary writer¹; but unsatisfactory and inaccurate enough, as we may well believe, seeing the numerous stages through which they had had to pass. Daniel Morley, one of those students who extended their travels into Spain and Arabia for the sake of climbing two or three steps nearer to the originals, complains of the final banishment of the ancient philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, from the schools. On his return from his travels, he says, he was disgusted at the universal substitution of "Titius and Seius" for those masters of knowledge, to whom his efforts had been devoted. In despair of reversing the current, he retired into Spain, where still something like Greek study was cultivated: in order that he might not be left the only Grecian among a nation of Latins². This passage has probably been misunderstood. It does not seem to me to apply to the commentators on Aristotle, so much as to the new study of the Civil law, which was beginning to supersede philosophy altogether. In the succeeding generation, Roger Bacon laments its growth as a step in the wrong direction; but it never took much root in England. Early in its infancy it came into collision with the old laws and customs of the country, the good

¹ Bacon, *Opus Tertium*, 25. See also Brewer's preface.

² Daniel Morley belongs to the latter half of the 12th century. The passage alluded to is in the preface to his work, *De Naturis Inferiorum et Superiorum*, dedicated to John of Oxford, Bishop of Norwich, and sent from Spain. It runs "Vocatus ab amicis et invitatus ut ab Hispaniâ redirem, cum pretiosâ multitudine librorum in Angliam veni, cumque nuntiatum esset mihi quod in partibus illis disciplinæ liberæ silentium haberet, et pro Titio et Seio penitus Aristoteles et Plato oblivioni darentur, vehementer indolui; et tamen ne ego solus inter Romanos Græcus remanerem, ubi hujusmodi studium florere didiceram, iter arripui." Wright, *Biogr. Lit.*, who seems to overlook the meaning of "Titius and Seius,"—the John Doe and Richard Roe of the Civil law.

rules of the Confessor, which every Englishman looked back to as the ordinances of an Age of Gold; it was prohibited by edict, and shortly vanished from the scene.

In 1228 Henry III. issued letters patent for the opening of the English schools, which had been legally closed since the time of Harold. We are not to suppose that the convents had ceased to be centres of education, or even that the special establishments at Oxford and Westminster, which had been in existence before, were newly created at this time¹. The royal edict gave sanction to a state of things which no authority could have suppressed; but a great impetus was imparted by it to the fashion of attending schools. In 1231 the number of students at Oxford was reckoned at thirty thousand. This seems quite incredible; but the number was by many accounts large. Bologna and Paris were full of Englishmen about this period, and the avidity for such education as could be afforded appears to us in melancholy disproportion to the results of it in literature.

Twice in the literary history of the Middle Ages has the cause of learning been defended and advanced by a band of friends associated in their education and studies at the university of Oxford. The efforts of the first group, though unfruitful to their own age, contributed to the awakening which was heralded by the second. The more fortunate scholars of the 16th century were guided by the advice and warned by the failures of their predecessors in the 13th. The interest of the first company is centred in the mysterious mind of Bacon; the second groups itself around the familiar form of More. Yet in both cases it is

¹ Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* I. 16, note, gives 1149 as the date of the first lectures at Oxford, and 1180 for the first mention of the resort of scholars to it.

the man rather than the scholar that should attract our notice: for both were surrounded by more learned friends. This is not a subject for regret. It is the man, the representative of his age, even though unacknowledged by it, who lets us see into the hearts and thoughts of his contemporaries. Erigena and Tobias have less claim to the respect even of scholars, than Friar Roger, with his illegible Greek alphabet and barbarous Latinity. Yet but for the almost accidental association of his name with one great modern invention, few would have accorded him the place which is his due; and something even yet remains for his countrymen to accomplish, in vindicating his claims to a higher honour in our history.

The praise which has been withheld from him has been lavishly accorded to his friend Robert Greathead or Grosteste; to such an extent indeed, that it rouses almost a spirit of opposition in the judicial mind of Hallam¹. He seems to have been a man of independence and spirit, which are strongly evidenced in his religious controversies. The same character led him while young to explore beyond the limits which custom had set to education. He found a teacher in Nicholas or Elicherus of St Albans, a Greek, apparently one of the earliest of the refugees who had fled from the impending ruin of the Eastern Empire². From him he learnt the rudiments of his native tongue; and with him he endeavoured to extend the benefit, by translations, to his countrymen. His choice was unfortunate; but after short acquaintance with the spirit of his age, we cease to wonder at it. The Apocryphal Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, believed then to be a strong evidence of the

¹ "Grosteste was a man of considerable merit, but he has had his share of applause." Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* i. 94.

² Leland, cccxl.

truth of Christianity; the spurious works of Dionysius Areopagites (not the first time we have had them in the same connexion); *Annotations on Damascenus de Orthodoxâ Fide*, and a Latin version of *Suidas*, or a part of it, probably the Ecclesiastical Articles,—these attest the object which had led him to the Greek, and the scope of his vision regarding it¹. That object, the defence of religion, we should be the last to scorn, who reap the benefit of the comparatively liberal spirit in which our ancestors treated the religious discussions of their time; and Grosteste, acknowledged to be the first forerunner of Wicklif², the strenuous resister of Rome, the active innovator of learning, is the last man in whom we should despise it. Of him it is recorded by one yet greater than he, that while “Solus Boethius, primus interpres, novit plenarii potestatem linguarum, solus dominus Robertus, dictus Grossum Caput, novit scientias³.” He died in 1253.

John of Basyng, his companion at Oxford and Paris, is the pilgrim of the company. He visited Athens at a time when, as he tells us, it was very rare to see there an English face. Thence he brought several books, collected at the instance of Grosteste, and by him consigned to the Franciscans' library at Oxford, presided over at this period by Adam Marsh. The entertaining and enthusiastic antiquary to whom we owe so much of the details of this time searched there for these treasures, and describes with pathos and horror the melancholy havoc that time and neglect had made among them⁴. From what we know further of

¹ See Matt. Paris, p. 520. One account gives him the credit of all *Suidas* translated into Latin; another, and more probably, only of the ecclesiastical articles: Hallam confines it to one legend.

² See Milner's *History of the Church of Christ*.

³ Bacon, *Op. Majus*, p. 44, Jebb's edit.

⁴ Leland, CXXLVI. Basyng's pilgrimage was in 1240.

that erudite fraternity, the Oxford Minorites, we shall not refuse to join in his reproaches. Basyng wrote a treatise on the difference of particles, and a grammar called *Donatus Græcorum*; probably a translation in Latin. To him is ascribed the introduction of Greek numerals into England; their reign was short¹.

William Sherwood was another scholar and collector of MSS., especially in the Greek language, which he learnt in Italy. These were afterwards seen by Cuthbert Tunstall, Bp. of Durham: and as there is reason to believe, destroyed by him, or some more barbarous underling. Fitzacré, Bland, Belclif, and Firnam, are names of whom little is known; they appear among the scholars of Nicholas the Greek.

Roger Bacon was born near Ilchester, about 1215. He studied at Oxford under Edmund, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, whom to judge by his pupils we must consider a remarkable man. Thence he proceeded to Paris, where he took his degree of Doctor of Divinity. At the persuasion of Grosteste he entered the convent of the Franciscans at Oxford; this advice seems to have been prompted by a sincere though mistaken friendship; at an early age Bacon was harassed by doubts and mental difficulties, and his fellow-student probably hoped to dispel them by the discipline of a conventual life, or by the pursuit, so congenial to himself, of ecclesiastical dignity. Bacon devoted himself entirely to study; alone and without sympathy he toiled for twenty years in the cloister, mastering step by step all the knowledge and science of the world. His means, upwards of £2000, he expended in experiments and books; a sum truly large for those days, and shewing that no necessity of livelihood had driven him

¹ Matth. Paris, p. 801, *Hist. Maj.* year 1112.

to literary labours. His lectures on physical matters were now much sought after; but his studies had unluckily convinced him of the faulty character of the Spanish translations of Aristotle, which his honesty compelled him to denounce. This raised against him the enmity of the Spanish "nation," one of those into which the students were divided, who treated him with much contumely, and abandoned his classes.

About this time commenced the dissensions between Henry III. and his barons, headed by Simon de Montfort, which were ended by the battle of Evesham. The legate, Guy de Foulques, an ambitious and intriguing Frenchman, threw himself so eagerly into the quarrel on the side of arbitrary power, as to produce a rupture between the Court of Rome and the nation. Grosteste and Marsh espoused the cause of the barons; Bacon, with the instinct of a monk, followed his spiritual superiors; but the friendship which originated in study was not quenched by politics. Much intercourse took place between the statesman and the scholar; the penetration of the latter was employed for his patron, and the patron's protection engaged on behalf of the discouraged experiments. Some time afterwards Guy, then Bp. of Sabines, sent to Bacon with the careless curiosity of patronage, desiring to peruse his writings. Bacon replied by the hands of a gentleman called Bonecor, that the rule of his order forbade him the use of the pen; and there seems to be a tacit reproach implied for the forgetfulness of this fact which the bishop had displayed. Fortunately he was soon after raised to the Papal chair by the title of Clement IV. He lost no time now in sending Bacon a bull to absolve him from all rules of his order which could interfere with his pursuits. Then at last after forty years of study the scholar could begin the labour of his

life. His contributions to a general reform of learning have come down to us in four works; one only of which, the *Opus Majus*, is perfect. This was his first production; it was sent to Clement by the hands of John of London, a favourite pupil, who is spoken of elsewhere by the master as one of the perfect mathematicians of the age. He included in it all that he could elicit from the vast storehouse of his memory; Grammar, Mathematics, Perspective, Experimental Science, and Moral Philosophy¹; all are handled with great care and erudition; and in none is the store of knowledge returned to mankind without addition and improvement.

It is the third part, *de Grammaticali Scientiâ*, with which we are especially concerned. True to his scheme of reformation, he casts it into the form of "things requisite to the improvement of knowledge." First, he recommends the study of the learned tongues, because they contain all that can be known. By these he means Greek and Hebrew, but especially the former. Another reason for their study is the difference in signification of corresponding words in languages. Under this head he gives an account of his troubles at Oxford, arising from his ignorance of the Greek words left untranslated in the versions of Aristotle, which after long study he had attempted to explain. He then exhorts to the study of the sciences of which the originals treat, lamenting the errors of unjust translators. Fourthly, he notes the deficiencies of Latin in Philosophy and Theology. Here he digresses on the advantages anticipated to religion from the works of the Greek Fathers; and on the probable confutations of Greek heresy, which he is somewhat sanguine in prophesying.

¹ The fifth part is unaccountably omitted from Jebb's edition: it has never been printed.

He then alludes to the Greek and Hebrew words found in the works which all use and read; and the comparative ease with which sufficient knowledge to explain so much at least might be attained. Here follows a Hebrew alphabet, which is unfortunately lost. Sixthly, he reprobrates the gradual corruption in manuscript of the translations themselves. Seventhly, their blunders, not to be referred to corruptions. Lastly, the Greek and Hebrew element in Latin is noticed, the ignorance of which leads to innumerable blunders in etymology, spelling, gender, and pronunciation.

There is clearly much repetition and confusion of arrangement in this; but it is exhaustive. Never were ignorance barbarism and conceit more crushingly exposed. Had Bacon been able to publish his criticism earlier, and himself to reap some of the benefits of his victory, he might himself have entered far upon the path he indicates. But by this time his reputation was injured by the suspicions of the vulgar; his privileges were envied by the monks about him; the elasticity of his youth was gone, and his patron was distant and neglectful. Again and again he appealed to his well-stored memory, and sent work after work to Rome, filled with more convincing expositions of ignorance, more cogent reasons for reform, more eloquent exhortations to study; and slowly he seems to have evolved a system in his mass of matter, struggling with age and persecution to leave some work behind him which should commemorate his battle with the age. The *Opus Minus*, of which a fragment only remains, seems to have been supplementary to the *Opus Majus*, and principally devoted to Theology; the *Opus Tertium* repeated much of the former works, enlarged and amended; finally, the *Compendium Philosophiæ* was commenced, which, as

far as we can perceive, was intended to include and supersede the rest. But life was too short for its completion; he died at the age of 78, his last years embittered, as we have cause to fear, by the malignant persecution of his enemies; especially of Hieronymus de Esculo, his superior, under the sanction of Nicholas III, the unworthy successor of Clement. A treatise composed in the year previous to his death contains no mention of ill-treatment; but from our knowledge of his patient heroism we should rather have wondered if he had deemed his personal wrongs worthy of a place among his writings; and the traditions of his imprisonment are too general to be neglected. The pretext was no doubt the popular accusation of magic; the real reason was the divulging of knowledge beyond the circle of the Franciscan rule; a crime unpardonable by monks, even when the recipient was the pope. Among his earlier writings he mentions a confinement on this account, in which he was kept on penitential fare by his superior and prohibited from study. But this he alludes to only because he was thereby delayed in the fulfilment of his engagements to Clement.

His other works are worthy of all the consideration we can give them. In the fragments of the *Opus Minus* he treats of errors in the translation of the Scriptures; but his comments are second-hand from Augustine, and he had no access to the Greek Testament itself¹. The *Opus Tertium* contains much that is interesting. In the tenth chapter he draws up a scheme for the diffusion of classical knowledge, by the appointment of special teachers, and the purchase of MSS. But lest it should be thought that he falls into the common error of resting faith and

¹ *Opus Minus*, p. 351, Brewer's "Opera Rogeri Baconis quædam hactenus inedita," one of the Rolls' series,

knowledge on the words rather than the substance of the ancients, he proceeds to classify the arts of logic and grammar as auxiliary not principal sciences. "The Arabian churl," says Avicenna, "knows grammar by nature; and this is necessary in all men, for we know logic by nature, and logic is posterior to grammar. Parts of speech indeed, and terms of logic have to be learnt; but we have a natural ability to compose sentences grammatically and form arguments logically. This however is the object of Grammar and Logic¹." It would be difficult to find a sentence which goes deeper to the roots of the errors which misled the school philosophers. Bacon's words are not correct, if judged by the terminology of modern times, but they are the expressions of plain sense, protesting against a jargon of vain technicality and verbiage. In the same spirit he offers his advice to those who wished to follow in his steps. Forty years had he expended on study; yet all that he knows he could now impart in three or at most six months by means of a compendium. This desideratum he afterwards attempted to supply, but was unable to complete it². He could teach a willing scholar sufficient Greek to understand the expositions of the Fathers on the sacred text in three days. So also with the Hebrew. And even in philosophy and Latin grammar he could do the same, as far as Greek and Hebrew might be required. But injustice has been done him in supposing that he promises in so short a time a real acquaintance with the Greek tongue³.

¹ See *Op. Tertium*, 28, and Brewer's Preface, p. 57.

² The title of a Greek grammar is found among his works; but it is not certain whether it exists. See Leland, and Jebb's Preface. There seems to be a tradition of it in C. C. C. Library, Oxford.

³ He says (*Op. Tert.* xxv.), "Puer Johannes melius intelligere hæc exempla, quamvis sint theologica (the Hebrew and Greek alphabets), quam omnes theologi qui sunt lectores et doctores in hoc mundo." It must be

He expressly confines his words to the first step in language, the power to read Greek words as they stand in treatises when they are construed and explained. The next step, the power of translation, he did not himself claim to have attained, and accorded the honour of it to few: the third, of speaking or comparing, to none. In the sixtieth chapter he introduces the question of accent. He does not lay down any complete system, but gives several maxims and illustrations in the correction of preceding errors. It is difficult to discover whether he looks upon it as an indication of tone, or only of emphasis; for he is led by the similarity of derivation to identify it with prosody. He calls our accents, "aspirations" or breathings; and punctuation "musicalia prosaica;" but distinguishes clearly between accent and quantity. He advocates the restoration of the circumflex, which had fallen into disuse. He classes finally all marks of distinction as "prosodiæ," ten in number. The first three are our accents. Then come two quantities, two breathings (¬ and †), and three "passiones"—the apostrophe ', the hyphen †, and the hypodiasstile), for dividing words that run into each other¹. So far had the accidents of manuscript writing

remembered that John was a mathematician, properly speaking. This mistake is committed by Anthony Wood, and also in the marginal contents in Brewer's edition; the following quotations will prove it to be an error: "Hoc est facile, ut dixi; quia si sciat legere, potest intelligere; nam auctores exponunt omnia et dant intellectum." "De istis duobus (translation and composition) non loquor; sed de primo." Again, "Robertus—tantum scivit de linguis quod potuit intelligere sanctos et philosophos et sapientes antiquos. Sed non bene scivit longius ut transferret, nisi circa ultimum vitæ suæ, quando vocavit Græcos, et fecit libros Grammaticæ Græcæ de Græciâ et aliis congregari. Sed isti pauca transtulerunt." *Op. Tert.* xxv. And see *Opus Majus*, p. 44, quoted above.

¹ "Passionibus," he says, "non utimur:" that is, in Latin. Their names and provinces I have gathered from the *Compendium Philosophiæ*.

intruded themselves into the structure of language. He remonstrates strenuously against the dropping of the aspirate; but, on the other hand, protests against the substitution of *ch* for *h*; this was probably a soft sound, like "tch," which we shall find hereafter making yet more alarming inroads upon its neighbours. He then discusses punctuation and interrogation¹; then prosody or quantity²; where we find many minute rules, and frequent reference to the Greek; but Greek letters are avoided, on account of the ignorance of transcribers. This disturbing element has lost us much that we might have gathered otherwise; and it is one of the drawbacks Bacon seems most bitterly to have lamented.

The opening chapters of the *Compendium Philosophiæ* are occupied with the impediments of learning; they are, the corruption of morals, the influences of authority, popular opinion, custom, and the obstinacy of ignorance. The same are discussed in Part III. of the *Opus Majus*. But the dread of appearing ignorant is the greatest of all. The study of the civil law; its monopoly of the funds devoted to the maintenance of scholars, and its confounding the two classes of lay and clerical students, afford two other hindrances. But, as he appeals to the jurists themselves, Aristotle taught better the philosophy and origin of law, than all the Roman civilians together: "*majora sunt in his paucis capitulis (De Legibus) quam in toto corpore juris Italici.*" Besides, as Aristotle treats also of Ethics and Politics, his writings are more in conformity with the Christian law; which is after all the only true study for clerics. He does not see why these clerical jurists should not turn cobblers or carpenters at once. Then there are impediments from the intrusion of youths into the chairs

¹ Ch. LXII.

² Ch. LXIII.

of theology; the two minor orders presenting such attractions to youth, that boys from ten to twenty were eager to be admitted, and began teaching before they had had time for study. The secular clergy meanwhile entirely neglected it. The disputes between them and the Regulars had also corrupted learning; Bacon enters (Chap. VI.) into the particular evils of this quarrel: the prejudice, the bad feelings, the neglect of important duties which it occasioned.

The first requisite of knowledge is an acquaintance with Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldee. It is not necessary that men should talk in these, or translate them fluently; but they should be able to read them. Hebrew and Greek teachers are now easily procured; Greeks especially are still remaining in England who were invited over by Grosteste¹. In early times, he says, great attention was paid to the improvement of language by the introduction of foreign words; but since men do not now perceive their

¹ Ch. VIII. summarizes the reasons for the study of Greek: we have given them less fully in the survey of the *Opus Majus*; here they amount to

1. The example of saints, philosophers, poets, and Latin sages.
2. They all assume its knowledge in their readers.
3. They believe their successors will learn it.
4. They made errors, which we must correct.
5. Their language is composite.
6. Latin grammar is formed on its model.
7. There are no original theological or philosophical works in Latin.
8. Translations never express the full meaning
9. Or give the full force of words and idioms.
10. In particular the Scriptures should be read in Greek.
11. And the translations of Aristotle are infamous
12. And very few. Incidentally Bacon here remarks that he had seen Aristotle's *Natural History* in fifty books, in Greek; while the Latin has but ten. At the present day there are but twenty-four genuine, or even fewer.
13. The liability to error in understanding even a good translation. Eight classes of errors are enumerated. Truly Bacon had not

origin, they use them wrongly. He gives a list of about three hundred words derived from the Greek; about seventy more, whose use is solely ecclesiastical; and forty-two literary and scientific terms. This monster birth of the Graecizing fashion of Aldhelm and his contemporaries is very curious, but not edifying: a large proportion of the words set our teeth on edge by their atrocious barbarism.

The latter part of the work, or of the fragment we possess, is occupied with orthography and pronunciation. Of this we shall have more to say when we come to the reforms effected in the vocal part of the language by Cheke in the sixteenth century. For the present it is time to quit this author and his works, among which I have lingered for some time, because they exhibit as forcibly as any others and assail more eagerly the real darkness of the Dark Ages. The mechanical difficulties attending the production of a treatise, enormous as they were, are cast into the shade by the moral discouragement and want of sympathy which beset the writer. To appreciate rightly the powers of a man like Bacon we must remember that his foes were both the vulgar and the literary world, that his friends might be enumerated in a line, and that the only reader he could immediately anticipate for his work was his patron, a man unable, if willing, to do justice to his superhuman toil. Some fruit of it is apparent in the *Decretals* of Clement, composed though not published on the

studied the arts of "division and distinction" to no purpose, though he saw somewhat further beyond them than others!

At this point he turns aside to bestow a little appropriate ridicule on the prophecy-mongers, who were busying themselves with the Number of the Beast. All their Greek words, composed of numerals (for they followed in the unhappy track of Irenæus, with less success), are spelt wrong: *ἀντημος* or perhaps *ἀντεμος*, (for *ἀνθημος*, by which a derivative of *ἀνάθημα* is intended,) *ἀπρουμε* (*μα*), *τειταν* (*τιταν*); and one bold Latinist, *DIO LVX*!

receipt of Bacon's work; in these a knowledge of the learned languages is insisted on, apparently for the first time, as a qualification for the priesthood. To facilitate their attainment, professors are to be appointed in the universities of Paris, Salamanca, Bologna, and Oxford, to teach Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, and Chaldee; two holding each chair. These excellent intentions were not immediately carried out; and on the publication of the *Decretals* by John the XXII, all mention of Greek had disappeared from the list. The omission was due to ecclesiastical disputes, which visited on the language of Hellas the detested heresies of Byzantium.

At this time (about the middle of the 13th century), the revival of Greek study was slowly making progress in Italy. The expected sieges of Constantinople scattered far and wide over Europe the few who preserved traditions of scholarship in the capital of the East. No other country seems generally to have sympathized in the ardour with which the Italians threw themselves into classical learning. Hardly an individual beyond the Alps has left records of his interest in the new movement. Books, rare even in Italy, were found in fewer numbers in proportion to the distance from her universities. There were the head quarters of the copyists. As early as 1300 there were fifty persons at Milan who earned a living by this trade. But the university of Oxford descended now into a lower depth than for many years previously. The influence of Scotus and Occam was detrimental to all but the scholastic learning; their execrable Latinity was a proverb; the fame and numbers of the colleges declined; the oppidan members became extinct; and the University of Paris broke off the long continued connexion between them. It redounds to Bacon's credit that he had endeavoured to avert this ruin;

that he had been the first assailant of the causes that were producing it, and the first summoner to a nobler study. The bigoted ecclesiastics at Vienne, who omitted the tongue of Chrysostom and Aristotle from their edition of the *Decretals*, only lost the honour of associating their names in his work, and obtained the disgrace of frustrating his bequest through Clement to the world; but by this time the dawn had set in from Eastward and the ears of men were open to the teachers' voice¹.

The *Philobiblon* of Richard Aungerville, ascribed to the middle of the 14th century, contains a few scattered Greek words², and testifies to its author's slight acquaintance with Greek and Hebrew. He left his books to Oxford.

Sir John Mandeville, considered the earliest of English Classics, must be added to the list of travellers who acquired some knowledge of Greek. He gives a perfect Greek alphabet, and a few inscriptions are to be found in his writings, which he copied from the church of the Sepulchre in Jerusalem. His Travels were written in 1366.

John Wiclif, a great name in the cause of liberty of opinion, belongs to the latter half of the century. His translation of the Scriptures was made from the Latin, and we have no authority for ascribing to him any knowledge of the original³. Yet is its publication not improper to be mentioned here. It is impossible to trace the connexion throughout of all the threads which united to cause the overthrow of the great Intellectual Despotism; but the as-

¹ About 1430 some Greeks are said to have claimed a stipend for teaching Greek at Paris under the Vienna decretals; but this is doubtful. Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* I. 107.

² See Hallam, *Lit. Eur.* I. p. 107. His industry has counted them.

³ It was published in 1383.

sistance mutually rendered by the reforms of Learning and Religion has forced itself ere this on our notice, and is aptly characterized by the great Reformer in one branch, speaking of the greatest in the other. "Martin Luther," says Bacon, "finding what a province he had undertaken against the Bishop of Rome, and finding his own solitude, being noways aided by the opinions of his own times, was forced to awake Antiquity and to call former times to his succour, to make a party against the present time. So that the ancient authors both in Divinity and Humanity which had long time slept in libraries, began generally to be read and revolved. This by consequence did draw on a more exquisite travail in the original languages wherein those authors did write, for the better understanding of those authors, and the better advantage of pressing and applying their words. And thereof grew again a delight in their manner of style and phrase; and an admiration of that kind of writing; which was much furthered and precipitated by the enmity and opposition that the propounders of those primitive but seeming new opinions had against the Schoolmen, who were generally of the contrary part, and whose writings were altogether in a different style and form¹."

Here, in his own transparent prose, language which Minos might have used had he written in English, the Master of Sciences draws the line between the dying and the regenerated Philosophy. Religion, Education, the strong panting of youth after knowledge, the dissatisfied craving of the aged logician, all pointed to the old paths in which mankind had walked before Aristotle clipped and trimmed their borders. For though Aristotle was

¹ Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*.

great, the collected experience of the world besides was something greater than he. It matters little that some educators of the age would have set up others, perhaps inferior to him, on his vacant throne; the collision even of adverse servitudes was producing a spark of freedom.

CHAPTER V.

"At length the man beholds them die away
And fade into the common light of day."

WORDSWORTH.

EARLY in the fifteenth century we find a cluster of names among the students of Greek in Italy which betray an Anglian origin. These were the pupils of Baptista Guarini, the son of Guarino Guarini of Verona, who was a pupil of the first introducer of Greek learning into Italy, Emmanuel Chrysoloras. The most eminent among them was John Tiptoft Earl of Worcester, whose praises are sounded in a funeral oration by Ludovic Carbo on their common master Guarini¹. From the same effusion our knowledge of the rest is mostly derived. The other names are those of Robert Fleming, a cousin of Richard Fleming the founder of Lincoln College, Oxford, William Gray, John Gundorp, and John Free, the reputed author of a translation of Diodorus Siculus², and (with more proba-

¹ He was beheaded on Tower-hill, by order of Edward IV., during the wars of the Roses.

² This is disputed, the Italians claiming it for Poggio Bracciolini, the great discoverer of classics. The controversy is a dull one, and the victory seems to rest with the foreigners: Leland, on one side, urges that Free

bility) of a version of Synesius, which Leland preferred to the original.

In the University of Oxford, meanwhile, the spirit bequeathed by the persecutors of Bacon was rapidly destroying the accumulations of Grosteste, Aungerville, and the good duke Humphry; the latter of whom had bequeathed six hundred volumes to the Franciscan Convent¹. To that society belonged two libraries, called the Convent, and the Scholars' library. These priceless treasures were stupidly and disgracefully neglected: an iniquitous traffic in them was kept up by the avarice of the friars, in which the greater portion were sold. The remainder were ruined by damp and vermin; in Leland's time hardly a volume was left. The perseverance of the antiquary led him to encounter many difficulties among the janitors of Oxford, which he describes with much humour; when at last he penetrated to the recesses of that place of learning, he found not three halfpennyworth of MSS. which had escaped destruction. Erasmus, a more sober authority, could hardly refrain from tears, on viewing the remnants of these once prized collections; won by the toils of generations of pilgrims, and now lost, when the key was at last found which could unlock their treasures. William Selling, who studied at Rome in the middle of this century, accumulated another library at Christchurch, Canterbury, which was after a few years accidentally destroyed by fire². Truly

was, or would have been, made Bishop of Bath in reward of the complimentary Preface dedicated to Pope Paul II., which, as he was a physician, is not likely. On the other hand, the existing translation bears Poggio's name. Leland, p. 462, *Hal. Lit. Eur.* Vol. I. p. 143.

¹ Others number them at 129, or 108 only. *Hal.* p. 108.

² Selling was sent to Rome on a semi-political mission by Henry VII., in the interests of learning. The only copy known (till lately) of *Cicero de Republica* was lost in this fire, which originated in a drinking party.

the guardians of learning in the fifteenth century had much to learn from the Saxons of the ninth! Poggio, who visited England about 1420, describes them as given up to sensuality and sophistry, attached only to the barbarisms and quibbles of modern doctors, who in Italy would not have been thought worthy of a hearing.

The kindly feelings of associates in a common pursuit not shared by others have enabled us, by the linking of their names in eulogy and commemorative history, to present the chief scholars of the Middle Ages in groups clustered around some common centre, either of place or person, deriving their knowledge in general from one origin, and typified by the most eminent, most farseeing, or most fortunate in the regards of posterity, of the band. We are thus enabled to trace what we find of Greek learning in England to the few Greek wanderers who have at different times been attracted to her shores. Thus the Anglo-Saxon schools were founded by Theodore and Adrian; the first Oxford school owed all they knew to Nicholas of St Alban's. Many of the most eminent scholars, it is true, as Wilfrid of York, Benedict Biscop, Athelard, Morley, John of Basing, and Selling, acquired Greek in their travels; but these native importers were never able to establish a school at home. This will account for the stationary character of the 15th century, which we have been examining, during which it is evident that Greek studies, united with Italian travel, were becoming fashionable, while the education to be obtained at the Universities shewed no symptom of improvement. The increased facilities of locomotion at the present day obviate many of the evils that would otherwise result from the isolation of modern universities: but from experience of history, it may well be questioned whether

they do not debar themselves from many advantages by their independence of each other's aid.

Be that as it may, in 1488 Cornelius Vitelli settled in Oxford. One of his first auditors was a shy, industrious Wiccamist, greatly distinguished at school, and at this time a fellow at New College of some twenty years standing. The rudiments of Greek he had probably attempted before; but the new lights obtained from the foreign teacher so excited his desire of improvement, that he started immediately for Italy, to attend the instruction of Chalcondyles and Politian. His name was William Grocyn; he followed through Italy the footsteps of his friend Linacre, the nephew of Selling; who had accompanied his uncle in 1485 on a political mission to the Court of Rome. Linacre and Selling were both scholars at Christchurch in Kent, and fellows of All Souls' College; the latter had been selected by Warham for the appointment, chiefly on account of his classical attainments. Linacre formed an intimate acquaintance with Hermolaus Barbarus at Rome, and with Aldus Manutius at Venice. The former he met accidentally in the library of the Vatican; and commenced over the Phædo an enduring and valuable friendship. To Aldus he was afterwards indebted for the publication of his first translation from the Greek, to which Grocyn wrote the preface; viz. Proclus's *Treatise on the Sphere*¹.

On returning to Oxford, Grocyn commenced lecturing on Greek in his own College of Exeter, where he had settled. Linacre resumed the labours of his pen. We find another friend intimately associated with them at this pe-

¹ This must have been the first contribution of an Englishman to Greek interpretation that was actually printed; and probably the first that had any scholastic qualities displayed in its production.

riod, William Latimer; whose knowledge of Greek must be taken on tradition; for, like Grocyn, he has left no proofs of it in print. Soon after, William Lilye was added to their number, a young Oxonian who had travelled in Palestine, learnt Greek in Rhodes, and perfected his studies in Italy; he alone of the fraternity seems to have broken through the reserved and philosophical demeanour, which among a nation of barbarians prevented the spread of polite letters. A lively letter still extant in MS. gives an account of the difficulties and privations he underwent while studying at Venice. We conclude from this that his acquaintance with the triumvirate dated after his return to England; for many wealthy and liberal friends would have been found to assist the friend of Linacre and Grocyn. He lived to be the first Headmaster of St Paul's School; the first Headmaster in England who could read Homer and St Paul; and the representative to many generations of youth of the janitor at the portals of knowledge, the archetypal schoolmaster, personified in his immortal Grammar.

The last and youngest of the party was a pupil of Linacre's, also a scholar from the school at Canterbury; he was the son of Sir John More, the Chief Justice of the King's Bench; and was considered the foremost of the rising generation at the University. Early in youth he had given such promise of distinction as to be ranked a worthy helpmate of this learned company; and that was no common task in which they were engaged. Understanding unequalled, ready memory, great facility of speaking, knowledge of Latin from a boy, and rapid progress in Greek at an age when boys even at the present time cannot boast of greater attainment—such, retrenched in some of the superlatives which the vicious taste of the age affected, is the testimony of Erasmus to Sir Thomas More.

The mention of the great Reformer introduces a new phase of this history. By his own account, he visited England in 1497 with the view of improvement in Greek from the society of the Oxford teachers¹. He was also invited by Mountjoy and others of his former pupils at Paris, whom he ardently desired to visit in their own country. After a short stay in London he came to Oxford; and there remained some time, lodging in a small Augustine Convent, dedicated to St Mary². Apparently however the acquaintance of congenial souls was the chief profit he derived from the visit; for in a year or two he left England for Paris, and thence travelled into Italy³; still desiring to perfect himself by the aid of better teachers. But his intellect, so peculiarly suited to the acquisition of languages, rapidly outstripped them all; and as he truly complains, he had at last to become for himself and posterity the pioneer of much in classical learning. During his residence at Paris (the second) he numbered among his pupils Alexander, the natural son of James king of Scotland. Many years afterwards he wrote to Hector Boece of Aberdeen, to inquire after his scholars in the North. Another acquaintance he made there was with Robert Fisher, afterwards one of the best Grecians in England⁴: but not to be confounded with John Fisher the excellent President of Queens' College, Cambridge, of whom more hereafter. Throughout his absence he kept up a correspondence with his English friends, especially

¹ Erasmus Brixio: *Ep.* xxxi. Vol. i.

² During this visit he translated Libanius: the original MS. is said to be in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

³ This was in 1499.

⁴ He wrote to him afterwards from England, "Tua te expectat prorsus Anglia; non modo jurisconsultissimum, sed etiam Latinè Græcèque pariter loquacem."

Mountjoy and More; but he seems not to have anticipated a speedy return.

In 1501 the seal of royal approval was first given to the new studies by the appointment of Linacre to the tutorship of Prince Arthur, during his residence at Oxford. For the prince's use he translated Proclus *On the Sphere*; in this attempt he made use of the labours of the prince's first tutor, Bernard Andreas of Thoulouse. An undignified squabble followed, from which neither party derived credit; it is impossible to say how far Bernard's translation was faulty, or Linacre's plagiarized; but the latter found a powerful assistant in Erasmus, who lodged with the unfortunate Bernard on his second visit to England, and had difficulties with him about his expenses. From these he was relieved by the liberality of Mountjoy; but he had not magnanimity to forgive the man who had detected his poverty, and spent innumerable epigrams in crushing the unhappy Astrologer; in which he was entirely successful.

The Prince died young, during his father's lifetime; but the speedy accession of his brother, the magnificent and accomplished Henry VIII. compensated the Grecians for the loss of their anticipated protector. Linacre became Physician to the King; the place he vacated at Oxford was filled by Lupset, his pupil and follower¹. The court became almost an Academe; Tunstall, Mountjoy, More, Pacey his inseparable friend, Colet, second to none in divinity but deficient in Greek, were its ornaments and pillars². Warham, a bigot in religion but liberal to men

¹ Lupset died young (in 1512); he seems to have given great promise of eminence in learning.

² Erasmus is known to be given to high eulogy of his friends; but one passage of their praises is worth translating: "In Colet," he says, "I seem to hear Plato himself. Who cannot admire the perfection of knowledge in-

of letters, was Archbishop of Canterbury; his reputation as a patron crossed the channel, and earned him the compliment of a dedication from Erasmus of his translation into Latin of Euripides' *Iphigenia* and *Hecuba*. This was the first invasion we have found into the list of strictly Classical authors, since the time of Bede: by this time many were printed in Italy, but the Transalpine countries were considerably in the rear.

So great however was the reputation of the English school, that Hermolaus Barbarus as early as 1500 suggested to Linacre the complete translation of Aristotle, as an enterprise worthy of their combined strength. Linacre, whom nothing appalled, attempted it, and performed his part, the meteorological works; but Grocyn and Latimer, with a better sense of their real position and utility, seem never to have thrown themselves into the task with heart or even entered upon their own share; and Linacre's completed portion never reached the press¹. We cannot ascribe this reluctance to the crusade against Aristotelian studies which these champions had undertaken. At this time their jealousy only touched the schoolmen and commentators; and through them the translators, their authorities; they still entertained a superstitious regard for the Great Master himself. Grocyn writes to Linacre in Italy commending his preference of Aristotle to Plato, and is himself gently reproached by Erasmus for his contempt of the latter, to whom, as we read in a contemporary tract,

Grocyn? Is anything more acute, more exalted, or more fine, than the judgment of Linacre? Has nature ever framed anything gentler, pleasanter, or happier, than the mind of More? It is wonderful how copious a harvest of ancient books flourishes here everywhere." Erasmus to Fisher, *Epist.* XIV., the same correspondent as above.

¹ See Casaubon's Pref. to Aristotle. He says a society was really formed for this purpose.

he ventured to apply the uncivil names of Greek fictions and old wives' fables¹. Their merit consisted in their clear conception of their own work; to educate themselves by the patient and judicious study of grammar, to lay the foundation of grammatical education for the English gentlemen of future ages; and to refrain from dogmatism and sophistry, when real knowledge and wisdom was yet unattainable. Thus Erasmus writes, (and we may take him in this part of his career to be the representative and leader of the English school,) "The first thing we lay down is, that grammar is the foundation of all courses of instruction. It is too well known to need mention here what immense destruction and corruption of good authors has arisen from its neglect. Still when I speak of grammar, I do not mean the inflexions of verbs or nouns, and the agreement of subject and predicate, but the laws of elegant and correct language generally; a study which cannot be acquired except by assiduous reading in the best authors²." Again, "Not to wander from our point, the chief part of this evil"—the ignorance of teachers—"seems to me to arise from the public places of education, which men now call by the ambitious title of Universities, as though no good course of instruction were wanting in them: for in these after scarcely three months study in Grammar, young men are whirled away to Sophistry, Dialectic, Propositions,

¹ "Philosophiæ studia secutus divinum illud Platonis ingenium Aristoteleni solum extollendo ita neglexit, ut opponentibus interdum sese ad Platonice doctrinæ defensionem, amicis truculentâ voce responderit Platonem nihil aliud in totâ disciplinâ quam Græcorum figmenta et aniles fabulas rudibus Philosophastris proponere; Aristotelis vero unâ cum Linacro et Latimerio communicato labore interpretandi provinciam est aggressus, quam tamen paullo post oblato sibi sacerdotii honore mutato consilio deseruit." G. Lili *Elogia*.

² *Eras. Eccl. sive de Rat. Concion.* l. 112.

Amplifications, Restrictions, Explanations, Solutions; dragons dwelling in a labyrinth of interrogation; and hence drawn straight to the precincts of Theology. When these stumble upon the author, of either tongue, who excelled in power for authorship, how blind, how fatuous, how palpably out of their element they are¹." Later in life he could write and say, "we have a right to congratulate our generation that this kind of learned man has vanished utterly from all our places of education²." One more extract we will give, as a testimony both to the spirit of the age, and the fame of More. It is from his friend Richard Pace, Henry's ambassador to Switzerland³: "There never yet existed any one who did not gather the sense of sentences from words, except only one, Thomas More, my countryman. He on the contrary gathered the meanings of words from the sentence; especially in understanding and translating Greek. This however is not to be considered as inconsistent with the spirit of grammar, but rather as something more than grammar, as the exercise of mind. The mind of More is indeed something more than human."

The unrivalled prosperity of Linacre at last aroused a spirit of enmity among his contemporaries in the professoriate; they began to recognize in the new study, not an honourable adjunct, but a formidable rival of the old. The Minorite Friars again entered on the scene, and a torrent of invective and calumny was directed on the fraternity. The favourite designation bestowed upon the innovators was that of infidel; others endeavoured to raise odium by

¹ *Dial. de rect. Lat. Gr. Serm. Pron.* p. 29.

² *Eccles.*

³ Extract from R. Pacei, "Invictissimi Regis Angliæ Primarii Secretarii apud Helv. oratoris de fructu qui ex doctrinâ percipitur liber." Published 1517. See More's *Life of More* (Appendix).

the cry of heresy. But the times were changed; instead of bread and water, solitary confinement and penance, the champions of Dulness were forced to resort to the uncongenial weapons of ridicule. Here however they had found their masters; Erasmus, in the *Adages* and *Encomium Moriae*, More in his *Utopia*, all the Grecians in epigram and satire, as one man encountered the shock, and won an easy victory. On the Continent, Von Hutten and his friends crushed the monks of Cologne with uncompromising ridicule¹; Reuchlin carried the cause to Rome, and with the help of Italian sympathy won an official though unnecessary sanction to the cause. The next step of the Oxford authorities was to rouse the passions of youth, in a futile endeavour to render the grammatical lectures unfashionable. A large body of undergraduates, banded together under the name of Trojans, pelted, reviled, and persecuted the attendants upon them; even the sacred commemorations of the University were made the occasion for unseemly and undignified abuse. In grave and deep displeasure More writes from court to the authorities to remonstrate against these impertinences; threatening that loyal body with the displeasure of Royalty, and appealing to the noble example of the sister University, where the students, not yet able to profit by the instruction of native professors, yet contributed liberally and generally to the support of teachers elsewhere². Erasmus, who had now taken up his quarters

¹ The *Encomium Moriae* was published in 1511; the *Adages* shortly before; the German satire, known as *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, in 1516. Hutten, Crotus and Busch are supposed to have been the authors. See Sir Wm. Hamilton's *Reviews*.

² More, to the University of Oxford: "Ego cum Londini essem, audiivi jam nuper sæpius quosdam Scholasticos Academise vestrae, sive Græcarum odio literarum, seu parvo quopiam aliarum studio, seu quod opinor verius improbè ludendi nugandique libidine, de composito conspirasse inter sese ut

at Cambridge, fully confirms this contrast between the reception given to learning at the two Universities¹; the latter of which, not having attained such fame hitherto in the old study, was less reluctant to enter upon the new. His host then was John Fisher, President of Queens' and Bp. of Rochester. This worthy prelate consulted Latimer and Erasmus upon the possibility of his acquiring Greek in mature age: the same feeling of being behind his age in scholarship afflicting him that had driven Colet to a laborious but ineffectual study². The former dissuaded him;

se Trojanos appellant; eorum quidam senior (ut ferunt) quam sapientior Priami sibi nomine adoptavit, Hectoris alius, alius item Paridis, aut aliorum cujusquam veterum Trojanorum, cæterique ad eundem modum non alio consilio quam uti ludum jocumque veluti factio Græcis adversa Græcarum literarum studiosis illuderunt. Accepi rursus ineptias illas in rabiem demum cepisse procedere, nempe nescio quem e Trojanis illis hominem, ut ipse sentit, sapientem, ut fautores ejus excusant, hilarem atque dicaculum, ut alii judicant, qui facta ejus considerant, insanum, hoc sacro jejunii tempore concionibus publicis non modo Græcas literas et Latinam politiam, sed valde liberaliter adversus omnes literales artes blaterasse....Præsertim cum Cantabrigio cui vos præluere semper consuevistis, illi quoque qui non discunt Græcè tamen communi suæ scholæ studio ducti in stipendium ejus qui aliis Græca prælegit viritum perquam honestè contribuant."

¹ "Anglia habet duas Universitates — in utrâque traduntur Græcæ literæ, sed Cantabrigiæ tranquille, quod ejus scholæ princeps sit Joannes Fischerus, episcopus Roffensis, non eruditione tantum sed et vitâ theologicâ. Verum Oxoniæ cum juvenis quidam non vulgariter doctus satis feliciter Græcè profiteatur, barbarus quispiam in populari concione magnis et atrocibus conviciis debacchari cœpit in Græcas literas. At Rex ut non indoctus ipse, ita bonis literis favens, qui tum forte in propinquo erat, re per Morum et Pacæum cognitâ, denunciavit ut volentes et lubentes Græcanicam literaturam amplecterentur. Ita rabulis impositum est silentium." *Erasm. Epist.* cccclxxx. and Jortin's *Appendix*. Also Hallam, i. 287. Again, "Oxoniensis Academia monachorum quorundam operâ nonnihil oblectata est initio; sed Cardinalis (Wolsey) ac Regis auctoritate coerciti sunt qui tantum bonum clarissimæ et vetustissimæ scholæ invidebant." *Epist. Erasm. Lud. Viv.*

² Erasmus writes some time after this, "Coletus strenue Græcatur."

the latter encouraged him freely by the example of William Cope, an English physician, who acquired it under similar difficulties¹. The same friend has recorded his partial and well-merited success. It was probably owing to Richard Croke, who was brought thither by Fisher when holding the office of Chancellor, to supply the place of Erasmus, and become the first Cambridge scholar who taught Greek among its future cultivators there. Croke had the singular fortune to be the introducer of that study to no less than three Universities, Leipsic, Louvain, and Cambridge. He had acquired his education at Eton and King's College, and had studied at Oxford with Grocyn². By the liberality of Warham he had been enabled to visit Paris, from whence he was invited to Leipsic. Later in life he removed to Oxford, where again he was the first teacher of the language recognized by the University³. Two Cambridge orations of his, on entering his office as Public Orator, have been preserved; their interest for our present researches is great; but as my acquaintance with them is confined to the extracts given in Hallam, it is unnecessary to repeat his quotations⁴. The first is a defence and vindication of his study, quite in the best style of Roger Bacon; yet not surpassing that great forerunner in boldness and precision of thought. The second is an exhortation which followed it, when the first burst of popularity had declined, and

¹ Cope is mentioned in Croke's oration, and Hallam, i. 288 and 270; spelt Cop. He translated parts of Hippocrates and Galen.

² Croke went to Eton 1495, and King's 1505; returned thither 1519.

³ He was succeeded by Wakefield, and went to Oxford in 1532.

⁴ Hallam, i. 288. These orations were published at Paris in 1520. Croke's other Greek works are *Introductiones ad Linguam Græcam*, *Elementa Græcæ Linguae*, *De Verborum Constructione*, and many translations from Theod. Gaza. See Knight's *Life of Erasmus*.

some students had quitted Greek for pursuits deemed more practical or more fashionable in the world.

The labours of Erasmus in England were many and important. He read the grammar of Chrysoloras to a few; but latterly changed it for that of Gaza, which he found occasion to prefer. That of Constantine Lascaris he placed second. In 1511 he was made Margaret Professor; but seems never to have been, as is supposed, Public Orator. He commenced by a translation of Basil's *Exposition on Isaiah*; but soon perceiving that it could not be genuine, he abandoned it for a more worthy task. His translation of the Greek Testament seems in part to have been written at Cambridge. This bold assault upon the very sanctuary of prejudice, the infallibility of the Vulgate, was too much for some, even there; yet Erasmus complains of but one College, as an exceptional case, which refused to allow it entrance within their walls¹. At this time the first printing press was established here, by Siberch of Basle². One tract by Erasmus is numbered among its few productions. He dignified the University by accepting from it the degree of Bachelor of Divinity: but his best title to her regard lives in his own heart-felt admiration³. His

¹ He writes to Henry Bullock of Queens': "Narrarunt mihi quidam δξιόπιστοι unum apud vos esse Collegium θεολογιώτατον: apud quos meros habet Areopagitas; qui gravi Senatusconsulto caveret ne quis id volumen equis aut navibus aut plaustris aut bajulis intra ejus Collegii pomeria invheret!" Dr Standish made a foolish and ignorant attack upon it. More and Pace took up the cudgels in his defence.

² When his edition of St Jerome was in the press, some learned Thebans went to the printer and implored him "not to insert any Greek or Hebrew type; for there was great danger in these languages, and no manner of use, but for curiosity!" See Knight. Siberch's types closely resemble those of the Basle press. He published Linacre's *Galen. de Ineq. Temp.*, two copies of which are extant, and Erasm. *de Scribendis Epistolis*.

³ In return, More says of them, "Jam Oxonia Cantabrigiaque tam

choice, he used to say, above all others, would have been the life of a student in her friendly cloisters. Italy looked on in jealousy, while northern schools were enriched by his diligence; and the Ciceronians of Florence exclaimed in disgust, "Erasmè, tu evulgas mysteria nostra!"

Nor though he had found a more congenial home, was he forgetful of his Oxford friends. Lupset, the successor of Linacre, was indebted to him for the happy advice that drew his thoughts from the schoolmen to Greek. Latimer's assistance he sought by an epistle, in the name of letters, when preparing the second edition of his Greek Testament. With More he maintained a correspondence, and an abiding friendship; and in the country pleasures of his house at Chelsea, in the society of his amiable and accomplished family, spent the happiest hours of his long and chequered life. The eldest daughter, Margaret Roper, was both an elegant Latinist, and acquainted to some extent with Greek; for throughout this century we find no

charum habent Erasum, quam habere debent eum qui in utràque diu cum ingenti scholasticorum fruge nec minore sua laude versatus est."

He visited Our Lady of Walsingham, and left there a Greek ode; though not up to the Porsonian standard, it contains much spirit:

ὦ χαῖρ' Ἰησοῦ μήτηρ ἠύλογημένη,
 Μόνη γυναικῶν Θεοτόκος καὶ Παρθένος,
 "Ἄλλοι μὲν ἄλλας σοὶ διδάσαι δωρεάς·
 'Ο μὲν γε χρυσὸν, ὃ δὲ πάλιν τὸν ἀργυρον,
 'Ο δὲ τιμίους φέρων χαρίζεται λίθους.
 'Ἀνθ' ὧν ἀπαιτοῦσ' οἱ μὲν ὑγιαίνειν δέμας,
 "Ἄλλοι δὲ πλουτεῖν, καὶ τῶς γυναικίῳ
 Κυῶντος ἐρατὸν οὖνομ' ἐλπίζειν πατρός,
 Πυλλοὺ τῶς γέροντες αἰῶνας λαχεῖν.
 Αὐτὸς δ' αἰδοῖς, εὐμένης, πένης γ' ὁμῶς,
 Στίχους ἐνέγκας, οὐ γὰρ ἔχει' ἄλλοτε
 Δόσεως ἀμοιβὸν εὐτελεστάτης, γέρας
 Μεγίστον αἰτῶ, θεοσεβῇ τε καρδίᾳ,
 Πασῶν θ' ἅπαξ ἁμαρτιῶν ἐλευθέραν.

jealousy of admitting the female sex to the enjoyment of ancient lore¹. In company with his host, he planned much for the advancement and perpetuation of learning in England; and in 1520 succeeded in retaining a formidable ally in the person of Wolsey, who was engaged in the foundation of Christ Church at Oxford. The great Cardinal, who did nothing by halves, instituted Greek lectures in his College, invited Ludovicus Vives, a Spanish scholar of eminence from Louvain, assigning him the revenues of a fellowship six years before he was able to perform the duties of his post; and meantime filled his place by inviting Matthew Calpurnius, who in company with Grocyn² commenced, though unsuccessfully, a reform of Greek pronunciation. When we find that the Græcists at this time made no distinction between the sounds ι , η , υ , $\epsilon\iota$, $οι$, $υι$, or between $\tau\mu$ and δ , gave π the sound of β , and β that of ν , it will be seen that this branch of language had not kept pace with the rest. But it was reserved for other hands and another University to remedy the evil. Calpurnius was succeeded by Clement, a friend and protégé of Sir Thomas More; Gunnell, another youth who owed his education and advancement to the same hand, was added about this period to the Oxford school. In 1517 Linacre published his first translation from Galen, the six books on the Preservation of Health. In 1519 these were followed by the fourteen books on Healing. But though the elegance of the Latinity and magnitude of the task render

¹ Jane Grey, Queen Elizabeth, and the daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke, Lady Cecil and Lady Russell, are instances.

² The only other work recorded of this patriarch of learning is his *Lectures on Dionysius Areopagites*: the same phantom of a Father who had misled Grosteste two centuries before, and Erigena yet earlier; but this time the forgery became evident, and Grocyn abandoned the task.

these publications remarkable, their interest for us is eclipsed by the small tract *De Inequali Temperie*, which the establishment of Siberch's press enabled him to print in England. In this little work, of which a copy is preserved in the Cambridge library, the first Greek characters which had been used in England are found scattered thinly among its pages. They are clear and fine, and of the same character as the types of the press at Basle¹.

From the year 1520 Hallam dates the decline of modern classical study in Italy. At that date France and Germany were her equals in all but purity of Latin style. In the display of learning, and in actual taste, England was certainly in the rear, though owing to the partiality of Erasmus she has obtained perhaps a greater reputation. She had no scholars to compare with him, or (still less) with Budè. But her institutions were better grounded, her foundations were more opulent, her great and wealthy patrons more liberal, her system of education more excellent. Hence while Italian learning degenerated into vapid Ciceronianism, and the other continental nations

¹ Linacre died in 1524. "Vir non exacti tantum, sed severi judicii," is Erasmus's character of him. As I have given a copy of Greek verses, the earliest specimen of Greek prose I have found may also be interesting. It occurs in a letter from Linacre to Budæus, written in 1521:

"Επεμψα δε σοι δακτυλιους τινας, ους ηδε σοι δοθεντας πειθομαι. ατελες πανυ, ει προς την τιμην αυτων αποβλεπεις, δωρον, ει δε προς την δυναμιν, ουκ ανεπιτηδειον ιως της ημων φιλιας ερεχυρον. δακτυλιους δε και γαμουνητων και διδασκαλων και ευωχησησμενων βεβαιου πιστων· ουτοι δε και του βασιλεως ημων αφιερωθεντες, αλεξιτηριοι σπασμων απαντων ειναι νομιζονται· ωσθ' ιερους οντας, φιλιας, ιερου χρηματος, ουκ αλλοτριον η τι δεσμον ειναι η μηημοσυνην· συ δ' ον αυτους, οπως αν εχωσιν, μετ' ευνοιας πεμφθεντας, ευνοικως αποδεξη. Ερωσω, Κελτων λογιωτατε." The letter is given entire in Johnson's *Life of Linacre*, but apparently with some inaccuracy. We need not suppose, however, that Linacre's Greek was perfect. At all events, to judge by the reply, his correspondent made out his meaning, and thanks him for the rings.

became our real rivals in scholarship, England alone has seized upon the ultimate and hidden end of Grammar, its wholesome office in the development of youth. The golden age of foreign universities was with us the beginning of the great public schools. Not but that Winchester and Eton already existed, to the great benefit of learning; not but that their representatives, Grocyn and Croke, were the founders of Greek study in four universities; not but that other schools, less known to fame, contributed much to the noble roll whose names have been here inscribed¹; yet still, the great multitude of those peculiarly English institutions sprang into existence in the early years of the sixteenth century. We must retrace our steps several years, to the foundation of Winchester by William of Wykeham, for the pattern to which all succeeding founders are indebted. But the model generally followed was the enlargement of this scheme by the superior resources of king Henry VI.; that singular monastic character, whose virtues and misfortunes have rendered his place in our regard the hardest to assign of all the many spirits who have lived in an age behind their intellect, and beyond their vigour. It seems probable that the civil war which cost him his liberty and crown, deprived England of a complete system of schools throughout the land, of which the College of Our Lady of Eton was to have been the chief and centre. Here all youths of fortune and ambition were invited as to a centre of learning, a juvenile University; while the foundation, the most noble boon ever granted by a king to the ranks of his people, should have drawn together the best of all the local establishments,

¹ Of the smaller schools, Christ Church, Canterbury, the most ancient foundation of learning in the country, deserves our notice for the names of Selling, Linaere, Latimer, and More.

and associated them on equal footing with the rest. All that could be carried out of this noble design was owing chiefly to the supervision of William of Waynflete, who came from Winchester at the invitation of the King. Though not himself to be reckoned among the Greek scholars of the Revival, he was a most eminent benefactor to the study: no less than three schools for instruction and "the reading of Homer" are ascribed to his foundation; and numerous Greek refugees found him a ready host and liberal patron¹. William Horman, of Winchester, was head master of Eton in 1530; he was, if Pits is to be depended on, distinguished for Greek learning. We can hardly believe that it had penetrated into the studies of tender years much before this; the encomiums of Erasmus, that English boys were wont to disport in Greek epigrams, would require a more enlightened attachment to their studies than is displayed at the present day towards Farnaby and Æsop². However by the statutes of St Paul's, founded in 1518 by Colet, Greek is specially enjoined upon the masters, "if such may be gotten:" and the worthy Dean took the best means of securing it by appointing Lilye to the mastership³. Udall at Eton, and

¹ Humphry, President of Magd. Coll. Ox. tells us that "De Græcis literis et Homeri lectione tres scholas extrui et aperiri voluit, ut diversis regni locis Græcarum et humaniorum literarum semina sparsa in fœcundum segetem totius reipublicæ excrescerent." See Strype's *Life of Waynflete* and Knight's *Life of Colet*.

² "An tu credidisses unquam fore ut apud Britannos aut Batavos pueri Græci garriant, Græcis epigrammatiis non infelicitè luderent?" *Dial. de Pron.* p. 48. Sir Thomas Elyot's *Governor* (1531) includes the rudiments of Greek. Farnaby's *Epigrams* were published in 1629.

³ Lilye composed his *Latin Grammar* for the use of the school, excluding a more elaborate, but less suitable, treatise which had been prepared by Linacre: this produced a breach between them which was never entirely healed.

Nowell at Westminster, were equally capable of instructing their pupils in it; and in the statutes of Henry VIII. creating new cathedrals, dated 1541, it is especially provided that the grammar-schools adjoining shall have masters "learned in Latin and Greek." All this instruction was entirely oral; nor was any Greek grammar printed in England till 1547¹. The statutes of Wilton school (1558), of Merchant Taylors' school (1561), of Hawkshead school (1588), and Harrow school (1590), contain a similar provision; but those of the last-named alone enumerate the authors intended; some orators and historians, and the poems of Hesiod: in the others the command must have been "an aspiration after hopeless excellence."

Eton under the auspices of Sir Henry Saville aspired even to the dignity of a printing press. Here was published the splendid edition of Chrysostom, which he edited at the conclusion of the century². An ancient Consuetudinarian of the school is extant, of the date 1560; in which Greek grammar figures only among the schoolbooks of the sixth and seventh, that is, the highest form; while Lucian and Æsop are read in the second and third. These last must evidently have been Latin translations; and the yet precarious tenure of the grammar is shewn by the reservation "aut aliud pro arbitrio præceptoris³." That it was hardly yet considered a necessary accomplishment for even the Busbys and Arnolds of the time is shewn by

¹ It is described in Hallam, i. p. 344. Its author was David Tolley, a physician.

² It cost him £8000. He gave books and MSS. to Oxford, and a new fount of Greek types.

³ The *Eton Grammar* was compiled by Camden, for the use of Westminster School, in 1585. It owes much to Clenardus, and probably to Grant, a former Head Master of Westminster. Hallam, i. 350 and 518.

the suspicious reticence of Ascham's "Schoolmaster" on the subject (1570).

The interest of this century is concentrated on Cambridge. Here between 1535 and 1550 raged a fierce contest about Greek pronunciation. I have already alluded to the astonishing monotony with which bad custom and the example of Byzantine Greeks had burdened the Attic Muse: the "lugubres sonos, et illud flebile iota," which had supplanted the rolling ocean murmur of Homer and harplike harmony of Plato. How the changes were brought about, is hid with many things beside in the chaos of the ages of darkness; the tenor of the change, if we may hazard one suggestion, seems to point to affectation rather than ignorance, to the fashionable drawl of the degenerate fops of the Empire, rather than to the rugged accent in which Gothic throats must have croaked about the Emperor's throne. The earliest alphabet in Greek characters which the English records have displayed, is that given in Roger Bacon's *Compendium Philosophiæ*. Bacon's explanation is as follows: "I will write down the Greek letters with their symbols and names, and will draw the greater and less symbols of each letter, and write under them the symbols of the Latin letters, that it may be known what sound and what power the Greek letters have, and that we may see by means of our own, easily, which are vowels and consonants, and which mute or liquid, and how many of each sort there are. Also because the Greeks count by means of the letters of the alphabet, using besides those figures which are not letters, but only symbols of arithmetic, I will write these among the letters of the alphabet, and write over them the Latin (Arabic) numbers which correspond to each."

In this nineteen letters are enumerated, α , β , γ , δ , ϵ ,

ε, ζ, η, θ, ι, κ, λ, μ, ν, ξ, ο, π, ϕ, and ρ; forming the numerals from one to one hundred; of these he allows vowels, α, alpha; ε, ētha or epente; ι itha or ita pronounced η, and substituted for ētha by the later Greeks, who made e always short; γ Græcum (French, y grec) used in Latin only to represent ν in Greek words, and called in Greek ypsilon; but the figure γ is not Greek; (the latter letters of the alphabet, σ, τ, υ, φ, χ, ψ and ω, he explains and allows, but they are by some accident omitted in the plate, possibly by mutilation :) ο breve, or omicron, and ο longum or omega, ω. They have no u, he says, but add ypsilon to omicron, and produce its sound by means of ου, which was printed afterwards 8.

Beta he always spells "vita:" therefore its pronunciation was that of the English v, like the modern Greeks; it is something like "Mi," in writing, he tells us; but the resemblance is difficult to trace. Gamma should be written Γ with one angle; Zeta is spelt "zita," and is not properly a Latin letter. Kappa and Chi should be pronounced the same. "Thita" bears the same resemblance to "Taf," that Phi does to pi; μ is spelt "mi;" ν, "ni;" "Xi" in Greek is "ix" in Latin; it is composed of qs, ks or cs; to call it "ex" is wrong. Pi and phi differ only "by accident," elsewhere he says "by aspiration," which probably is intended here. The latter is "non fixis labris pronuntiandum." σ is spelt "sima;" τ, spelt "taf," points to the modern Greek mispronunciation of ν: it is twice printed in Brewer's edition "cal;" but this I cannot help thinking must be a mistake of reading. ψ, Psi, is supplied in Latin by bs, and ps. The exceptions are, that π is pronounced like b after μ, and ν; "(την πεντηκοστήν = tin bentecostin)." κ after γ gives a nasal sound, as now; after ν, it sounds like g, as in συνκοπή = singopi,

which mistake is of course owing to the actual euphonic change not being remarked, of ν for γ . Lastly τ after μ or ν is pronounced d ; as $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$ — $pandos$.

The mutes are nine; they are given in the usual tabular form :

β, γ, δ , “mediocres.”

π, κ, τ , “leviter et debiliter prolatae.”

ϕ, χ, θ , “fortiter sonant, et dicuntur aspere.”

The first column are called labials, the third gutturals; this is probably an oversight, as he leaves the real gutturals without a proper designation.

Semi-vowels are eight; λ, μ, ν, ρ , the liquids : ζ, ξ, ϕ (a misprint for ψ) double letters; and the letter s , which some include among liquids.

Of Diphthongs he has

av , pronounced av , ypsilon after alpha ;

ev , ev or ef , ypsilon after epente ;

iv , iv or if , ypsilon after iota ;

ov , u , ypsilon after omicron ;

at , e , iota after alpha ;

et , i per iota, iota after epente ;

oi , i per ypsilon, iota after omicron.

I venture to substitute the last two for ae and ao , given in Brewer's edition, clearly by mistake. Bacon repeats his observations on them, comparing them with the Latin; so the omission of the Greek letters hardly justifies the error. There are besides three improper diphthongs, a, η, φ ; but sometimes iota is written “in literâ post literam, sicut in aliis diphthongis, sic” (Here a blank occurs, as in all cases where the Greek letters should be supplied; we may venture to fill it up with the usual example $A\iota\Delta\eta\Sigma$,

Donaldson's *Gr. Gr.* p. 11.) But in all these the sound of the first vowel is preserved. Sometimes *oi*, *ou* are not diphthongs. Then follows erroneous matter concerning triple vowels, owing to the mistake of *υ* for *φ*; *αῦρα* finally puzzles him.

In the sixteenth century the pronunciation was very much on this model. One other corruption had been introduced, and that a most inexcusable blunder, as Bacon had condemned it in its introduction; *κ* was now pronounced, as well as *χ*, like the English soft *ch*. Whether this came from a reminiscence of the guttural "*ch*," which has now, to our great good fortune, dropped out of the language, at least in the southern part of the island, or whether in an age when everything was learnt from books without a teacher, somebody had read Bacon's instruction to pronounce *κ* and *χ* alike, and had suited the common sound to some preconceived notion of what was due to the latter vocable, is a question difficult to solve. This "chatchophonous" pronunciation could not have been adopted in all words, since the double gutturals were rendered by the same nasal sound as in the present day.

John Cheke and Thomas Smith, both natives of Cambridgeshire and contemporaries at the University, where they were educated at St John's and Queens' Colleges respectively, and received the King's bounty as his special scholars on account of their good promise of ability, were the new assailants of the corrupt pronunciation. The first note of dissatisfaction had been sounded long before by Aldus Manutius; afterwards Erasmus had adopted some changes for the better in the sounds of *ι* and *υ*. This gave rise to the formation of two parties of orthoepists, some following Reuchlin and Melancthon in the uniform pronunciation of the disputed vowels (called from thence Itacists),

some, who received the name of Etists, imitating Erasmus¹. The attempt of Calpurnius and Grocyn had no effect, as I have said before; a wide field was still open for the Cambridge adventurers. In 1535 they began conferring on the subject; but differed in the sound of η and ν ². They completed a system, however, after studying Terentianus's work *de Literis et Syllabis*, and Erasmus. The hints given in Aristophanes and elsewhere by the sounds produced by the cows, sheep, and pigs of antiquity, are said by Strype, in his biographies of the two, to have aided them in forming it; but common sense and analogy of other languages must have done the greatest part. Smith first propounded it, reading Aristotle's *Republic* in private, and with much affectation of secrecy: also the *Odyssey*, in lectures at Queens' College. In the following winter the *Plutus* of Aristophanes was acted at St John's College, as a Christmas interlude; Ascham, a pupil of Cheke's, sustaining a principal part. This was contrived under the auspices of Cheke, who still proceeded with the greatest caution. But at this time, undertaking to lecture on Demosthenes, he contrived to roll out a word here and there with a sonorous *au* or *oi*, as though by inadvertence; and when at last the auditors began to notice that something more than accident was the cause, he explained that he had had surmises concerning a different pronunciation from the common, and could not avoid an occasional lapse into his hypothetical sounds. So by degrees he accustomed the ears of his hearers to the grace and emphasis of his style; and then at last announced the completion of his system, and his intention

¹ According to our pronunciation, Atists, as the other party would be Etacists.

² They were pupils of Redman, afterwards Master of Trinity, who lectured on Greek publicly in 1533.

to read after it for the future. Redman, his old tutor, at first opposed him; Ascham, a youth who seems to have filled the place at Cambridge that More occupied among the Oxford Grecists, perhaps by collusion, undertook to dispute the matter with Ponet, his fellow-student at Cheke's lectures. The professors stood by, while their younger friends tried their lances on each other: and the victory by common consent remained with Ponet. Redman, convinced at all events, and perhaps by this youthful passage of arms, in the spirit of a true scholar professed his adherence to the novel standard¹. In 1538 Smith became Public Orator, and lectured on Aristotle, Homer, "Socrates" (perhaps Isocrates is meant, but it may be Plato) and Euripides, in succession. The next year he left England for France, and communicated his doctrine to the scholars of that country, with indifferent success. Strazelius at Paris, who was supposed to be among the first Grecians of the time, held an argument with him on the subject. Smith pressed his antagonist hard with the cow whose voice is compared to the name "*ἀμῦνία*," and the sound *βη* for the bleating of a sheep. The Frenchman feeling himself insulted, or overmatched, answered, "These contests about the sounds of words are pedantic, and more fitting for a schoolmaster; we promise ourselves greater things from you, whom we have heard to be well versed in all kinds of Philosophy." But Smith did not agree in the high estimate formed by the other of all kinds of philosophy: his peculiar work, he felt with justice, lay in the province to which he had applied his mind. But as it was evident that no encouragement was to be expected from the Parisians, he gave up

¹ He was at this time Professor of Divinity.

² Ascham we find soon after lecturing on Isocrates; but Smith, we know, was a great Platonist in later years.

his original design of lecturing there, and contented himself with visiting a Greek in St Bernard's cloister, from whom he hoped to derive instruction and sympathy. But the Greek received him with indignation, reviling Erasmus for the introduction of "vast sounds and absonous diphthongs," and called him *βαδία*; which sounded like an insult; but fortunately Smith could not comprehend it. So he departed, and took his revenge on the Greek by publishing afterwards, that "they had no language in common, for the other introduced so much vulgar Greek into his conversation, as to be unintelligible to a scholar."

Meanwhile the enemies of the diphthongs attacked Cheke violently in the absence of his confederate. It is probable that the excessive caution with which they had introduced their innovations was rather caused by the fear of ridicule than of force; but if it were the latter, the event proved it at least justifiable. Dr Ratcliff, an authority on the other side, read lectures in Greek after the old fashion; the undergraduates, who espoused the cause of novelty, hooted him, mimicking his discordant Itacism. In great wrath he appealed to the protection of Gardiner, Bp. of Winchester, and Chancellor of the University, and after some correspondence, the decision of that functionary was given in his favour. It runs in the true imperial style of a paternal Government: "*In sonis omnino ne philosophator, sed utitor præsentiis. In his siquid emendandum sit, id omne auctoritati permittite.*" It was besides hedged in with penalties, which seem to shew that authority could no longer depend upon its bark alone; a regent infringing it was to be expelled the Senate, a questionist to be refused his degree, a scholar to lose his scholarship, and "the younger sort to be chastised!" The absurd straining of power which it would have required to carry out this edict,

seems to cast doubt upon its serious intention. Still, if the times, the dependence of the University, and the power of the Court, be fairly weighed, there will remain a great probability that it both could and would have been enforced. Besides this, there came a high-sounding dictatorial letter to Cheke, addressing him as "a young man of very great hopes," and exhorting him to direct his attention to more worthy objects. Cheke was at this time, it must be remembered, the King's own reader in Greek, which office he held from 1540—1551. The letter of Gardiner is dated in June 1542. Nothing gives us a clearer idea of what the scholastic bondage of intellect must have been, than such an expiring effort as this: and nothing impresses us so fully with the sense of what the abject submission of scholars had come to, than the attempt to realize an age in which such a thunderbolt was not thought ridiculous. Cheke replied in a respectful letter, but with much polite irony, that "By reason of this rejection of the right pronounciation, neither have I the fruit of reading, nor they that come, the desire of learning; and almost all have cast off the study of the Greek tongue. For when I entered upon this royal office, I found all my auditors well instructed in the way of pronouncing, and earnestly applied themselves to the study of Greek: and all, one or two only excepted, with all cheerfulness addicted to this way. Since therefore this pronounciation hath been received now a good many years, and is widely scattered among men by a customary use of it, should I alone, for no cause, reject that (that) hath been received by all upon very great cause? Since the order, many have departed from the lecture; and they that came, came with so sad and melancholic minds, as one would think they were mourning for the death of a friend. Truly I fear we must have no more de-

claiming in Greek, which we daily practised before, since that which is distinct and clear is taken away, and that which is confused and unsound only is left." Gardiner, who probably thought he had only to deal with a party of boys, and an impudent Bachelor of Arts, was so far shocked from his dignity, that he condescended to reply. Cheke rejoined; seven epistles in all passed¹; in which the scholar held his own with ease and courage against the prelate². The victory was so evidently with him, that no more was heard of the decree. Smith returning about this time from abroad shared in the triumph, and contributed to the battle his work, *De Restauratâ et Emendatâ linguæ Græcæ pronuntiatione*, which was printed at Paris in 1568. This work has singularly enough escaped the notice of Hallam³, who describes the controversy at length: it is divided into three parts, the first shewing the ancient use; the second comparing with it the two modern modes; the third refuting Gardiner⁴. In this work may be found the passage, which amid Strype's homely prose Hallam

¹ These were afterwards published at Basle by Cælius Secundus Curio, with whom Cheke left them on his journey into Italy.

² Gardiner in one place charges him to see that he be not the cause, "malum bene positum de loco movendi."

³ See i. p. 390. Hallam recognizes a passage in Strype as a quotation, but does not know whence it comes. It may be found in Smith, p. 39. Another quotation from the same book, "Lugubres sonos et illud flebile iota," is due to the same source, but Hallam seems to have got it from Strype. Whether Strype was aware of Smith's book, except at second-hand, I am not sure; for I do not think he mentions it, though quoting from it occasionally.

⁴ One remarkable hint is given in p. 15: "Recte etiam fortasse nunc Domine *ne* in furori per *e* Italicum, non quemadmodum diu per illud *e* Anglicum quod in 'Bee' dicimus, aut *me* cum *eue* nostro more loquamur, observatur." This change, he says, had been brought about by some one since the time of Dean Colet, who would have been horrified to hear it. It was no doubt due to some one with an ear for music.

pointed out as a quotation; it will bear quoting again, to wind up our history of this clever and spirited reform. "Thus by their pains and endeavours, never to be forgotten by posterity, was the noble Greek tongue restored to itself, as it was spoken in the times when Greece flourished, and brought forth Plato, Dionysius, Plutarchus, Demosthenes, Thucydides, and others; out of whose writings he and Cheke produced authorities that they pronounced the Greek as he taught. And by this revived pronunciation was displayed the flower and plentifulness of that language, the variety of sounds, the grandeur of diphthongs, the majesty of long letters, and the grace of distinct speech¹." Thus too were overcome and scattered "those hard and curbing masters, who speak in a perpetual whine, and have little else to utter but the lamentable sound of their dolorous iota²."

¹ Strype omits "quorum antiquitas veneranda vel solo aspectu terrorem injiciat his levibus Græculis, et in fugam præcipites dabit." P. 39. His translation of the rest is not very happy: "Castra nostra—in quibus flos et copia Græcæ linguae decerpitur, et sonorum varietas, et diphthongorum granditas, et longarum litterarum majestas, et *illuminatus ordo*, et distincti sermonis decus conspicitur."

² "Duros hos et lorarios dominos, ubi perpetuo lamentantur, et nihil ferè aliud habent ad loquendum nisi lugubres sonos et illud flebile iota." P. 47.

Wetstein afterwards revived the Itacism at Basle; an amusing volume contains the contributions of Huber, Ryhimer, Zosling, Fiechter, and Meyer, besides his own, to the cause. Published at Basle, 1686. He notices Beza and others as followers of Cheke; while Salmasius and Scaliger say something for the Itacists, but only in passing; nor was there any other name on their side. From him we learn a few further peculiarities of Cheke's school, which, in a matter so easily changed, probably varied with time. They pronounced η between a and e , like the French "*maison*," "*être*," and German \ddot{a} ; v had a sound between θ and ι ; that is, the French u , or more like the Devonshire oo . They also abandoned the nasals, $\gamma\kappa$, &c., which we have revived.

We must not forget, in the interest of this peculiar topic, the actual progress that these two Cambridge scholars shew in appreciation of Classical authors. We may even affirm that they were the first to replace the great masters of the Attic tongue upon the throne which they had so long yielded to ecclesiastics and grammarians. Besides the lectures of Smith which have been enumerated, he devoted much time to philosophy; Haddon, writing to him in the decline of life, exhorts him to take part in public affairs by the maxims of "his own Plato." The school of Cheke included (besides Redman, Ascham, and Ponet) Pilkington, Bill, Lever, Tong, Eyre, and Cecil, Lord Burleigh; Grindal was a pupil of Ascham's, and was selected for his peculiar excellence to read Greek with Elizabeth. Cheke's lectures on Herodotus, the *Euterpe* and *Polyhymnia*, were the means of exciting in Ascham the desire of travelling abroad. He passed through Italy and Greece; and was appointed through his master's interest to an embassy at the court of Charles V. Part of his time he employed in writing a circumstantial account of the state of learning abroad; which he did not consider equal to that of Cambridge. "Nothing here," he writes from Louvain, "is equal to our style, and to Car," who was Cheke's successor. On his return he accepted the custody of Cheke's library, in which the books belonging to Leland and Bucer were accumulated¹. He has the praise from Hallam of having been the first English prose-writer who is worth reading for his own sake.

To return to Cheke; he was chosen in 1544 tutor to King Edward VI. At this time, as we learn from Ascham,

¹ A vast number of Greek books and MSS. were contained in it; the list is given in Strype's *Life*; but even the Greek titles would take up too much room here.

who laments his loss at Cambridge, he had read Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Isocrates, and Plato (or parts of them), in public; and was to have concluded with Aristotle and Demosthenes. The *Ethics* he read with the King, who was at this time thirteen years old, and could, it is said, write and speak Latin elegantly, and translate into (? from) the Greek. In 1548 he was made Provost of King's, where he settled for a short time; but restlessness, and the reports of Ascham, led him soon after to undertake a foreign tour, in the course of which he read lectures at Padua, and at Strasburgh; at the former place he accomplished his purpose of renewing his old and rudely broken acquaintance with Demosthenes. Some orations he translated into Latin; and they were afterwards published by Wylson, a fellow of King's who attended the lectures at Padua, and added an English version of his own. This his last study was his favourite, both for the noble style, and admirable ratiocination of the orator. "None," he said, "was ever more fit to make an Englishman tell his tale praiseworthy in an open hearing, either in Parliament or pulpit¹;" and as we learn from Ascham, he sketched out on one occasion a course of study something as follows: "I would have a good student pass rejoicing through all authors, both Greek and Latin; but he that will dwell in these few books only, God's Holy Bible first, and then join with Tully in Latin, Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Isocrates, and Demosthenes in Greek, must needs prove an excellent man." Besides these, he used to dwell on the sweetness of Homer and Sophocles; and we who profit by the correctness of his ear, may also be proud to commend its taste.

We have now entered clearly upon modern ways and

¹ Wylson's preface.

habits of thought with regard to the classics. But this band was in advance of their age. At Oxford meanwhile there was little or nothing to detain the observer. Cheke paid them a visit, and was made a canon of St Frideswide; as appears by the registers, he abode there some time. But when Queen Elizabeth visited Oxford, Haddon answered a letter of Wylson commending what he had seen there, that nothing in that quarter was comparable to Smith and Cheke.

I have transcribed above a specimen of early English Greek prose; I may give here from Strype an epitaph of Cheke's, shewing some progress in knowledge, and more in taste; but hardly yet such as the Greek professors of later times would care to own. It is to the memory of his sister.

Ὅστέα τῆς Μαρίας Σισέλλης ἐνθαδε κείμεναι
 Πνεῦμα τελευτώσης κύριος αὐτὸς ἔχει,
 Ἡ πατὴρ μὴτρός τ' ἀγαθοῦν ἀνδρός τ' ἀγαθοῦ
 Οὐδα, καλῶ θανατὸν καλὸν ἔθηκε βίῳ.

Their success in restoring the true pronunciation of Greek led the two friends afterwards to attempt a more difficult task, the reconciling of the sound and spelling of their native tongue. This could only be accomplished by alteration in the other direction; and the evils which we now see in attendance on any such attempt, and which have caused the defeat of several well meaning speculators of late years, are sufficient to reconcile us to the failure. In fact, a language like our own, which has grown out of the wrecks and accumulations of others, moulded of composite materials, not springing directly from the early rudiments of speech, would lose all fixity and most of its meaning from alterations in orthography. On the other hand, the mere fact of the wide difference that has gradually arisen between sound and spelling, shews that the

euphony of literature had demanded a departure from rule. Hence neither from the one side nor the other can we ever wish to see a tendency to approximate; for it could be effected only by the destruction of sense, or by the injury of sound. However, some of Cheke's ideas are worth remembering; particularly that he was the first to advocate a greater use of Saxon words, a reaction against Ciceronianism which the whirligig of time has at last again brought into fashion. For an example of this, he translated the Gospel of St Matthew into vernacular English; this work was published by Mr Goodwin in 1843.

The mention of Cheke's translation from Scripture recalls us to consider the progress that had been made in that line since the time of Wiclif. Tyndale's version of the Pentateuch, New Testament, and some other portions, began to appear in the year 1526. He spent ten years in the work, labouring under manifold difficulties from the persecution of authorities both in England and abroad. It has been remarked by Hallam that the beautiful style of our authorized version is not the style of the period in which it was published; and upon referring to the parallel columns of the English Hexapla it will be evident that much of the merit usually ascribed to King James's translators is more properly due to Tyndale. He was the earliest English translator who was acquainted with Greek; and those who followed him, varied as little as possible from his original, with one remarkable exception. Miles Coverdale, who first produced the whole Bible in what we may call modern English, acted on the principle that variety was desirable, in order to convey the sense of the original more completely to one ignorant of the language in which it was written. His version appeared in 1537.

The authorized version was in hand during the years 1607—1611. The most eminent Greek scholars employed upon it were Lancelot Andrews, the almost universal linguist; Dillingham, of Cambridge; Sir Henry Savile, Provost of Eton, and Dr Peryn, Professor at Oxford; Andrew Downes, Regius Professor at Cambridge, and John Boys, of whom a very interesting memoir is preserved. The last two were engaged on the Apocrypha: and the excellence of some parts of the translation, which were then first undertaken, as the Books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, speak highly for their abilities. Boys undertook a double part, apparently supplying the place of Lively in the company appointed for the second part, since his death had left them without a head. Lively had been Hebrew professor, but Boys was equally proficient in both languages. He and Downes were afterwards employed as the Cambridge delegates in the Committee of revision; and engaged by Sir Henry Savile upon his edition of Chrysostom¹.

Next to the English Bible as a translation, though on a different level of value, must be ranked Chapman's translation of Homer. The present day has seen the beauties of this true poem so fully acknowledged, that the notice it would have been a duty to give twenty years ago is now no longer required. Seven books of it were published in 1598, the whole Iliad in 1611. The Odyssey was a later and somewhat inferior work. Chapman lays high claims to knowledge of the original; but it is rather a general, than a critical acquaintance. Let us now return to our summary of the literary history of the times.

¹ See Preface to the *English Hexapla*, Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa*, Book VIII., *Life of Bois*.

The latter half of the century contains little of individual interest for us. It is therefore unsuitable for the essayist to dwell upon, who seeks rather to shew the real bearings of the times, which he has gathered from their histories, by the most striking representative instances, and the most common-place occurrences of life in the ages past. Learning declined under the short reaction of Queen Mary; many valuable libraries, among them the poor relics of the Oxford collections, perished beneath the ban of the inquisitor; the noble system of education provided for youth received injuries from which it has never entirely recovered. But on the whole, the period of gloom was too short to destroy the habit of using the mental sight; there was no new importation of assistance from abroad, but the Protestant exiles, returning to their homes, brought with them a healthy spirit of progress (we can hardly say toleration) which was ultimately of advantage to the cause of knowledge. Greek lectures were resumed, at least in Cambridge; there were three courses, one grammatical, two more advanced; the instruction was elementary, but the scholars were younger than at present. Oxford was further behind her sister than before; there the old religion had nearly fixed itself again. Leicester as chancellor produced great improvement; Wood charges him with "puritanizing" the University, no doubt to the great benefit of its morals and its Greek. Hallam enumerates several educational works published in England before the close of the century; but their value was ephemeral. The last records of learned life which we may notice, but only in passing, since the author can hardly be considered an English scholar, are the delightful Ephemerides of Isaac Casaubon. But when he settled in the country,

there was no rival in England who could compare with him: nor indeed in any other country, with the single exception of Joseph Scaliger.

The search after Learning was ended, the casket was open, the treasures contained in it were won. Mankind could now stand upon the summit of former attainment, could read the record of past achievement, and spread wings of ambition for a flight into the regions beyond. The Saxons had laboured on the path, before its traces were obliterated, striving to reach the heights where wisdom dwelt; the Schoolmen had dangled in their own rope from the jutting crag surmounted by the form of Aristotle; the pioneers of learning had surveyed the peaks, smoothed the path, and pointed to the last ascent; the scholars of the Revival had seized upon the spoil. Ignorant of its value, they had decked themselves at first with the trappings of style, and the tinsel of verbal lore; then they exchanged it for the real gold of master-minds, and revelled in all the wealth and magnificence of Greece. But now a new era was opening: with the power to search antiquity came the sense of its defects; the education of England was accomplished, and its instrument consigned to the education of her youth. The same impulse which brought her even with her predecessors, carried her at once beyond them; and a guide to the new regions of Science was vouchsafed her in Francis Bacon.

We do not usually appreciate the magnitude of the stride made by this prince of the modern age, because we look rather to the new method which he pointed out, than to the new relations he established with the knowledge of the Past. The analysers of the Inductive Method dwell long and largely upon his claims to the Invention, or Discovery, or Revival, or Application of Induction; but they

do not tell us so much of the Review of Past Philosophy, which, cursory as it is, (almost contemptuous as it may appear to us, who can find much to reverence in it now that we reverence not it alone,) is yet perhaps the best title Bacon has to a foremost place among his own contemporaries. We listen to him for an instant; he tells us;—"The Sciences which we have, are descended to us mostly from the Greeks; but their wisdom was that of the professor, and was expended on disputation, a thing most alien to the search after Truth." Setting aside Romans and Arabs as unimportant, he comes first to the so-called Sophists, Gorgias, Protagoras, Hippias, and Polus: but now we see further that those who gave them this name, Plato and Aristotle, Zeno and Epicurus, Theophrastus, Chrysippus, and Carneades, were themselves, as truly, Sophists; the more ancient sages, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Leusippus, Democritus, Parmenides, Heraclitus, Xenophanes and Philolaus, differed for the better only in so far as their freedom from affectation, and from the desire of founding schools, set them above their more dogmatic successors. But a love of fame and popularity was the common bane of all; "so all the instances we draw from the origin and nature of the Philosophy which is in common repute, are not good¹."—"Of Utility we must say clearly, that that wisdom which we have drunk in so eagerly from the Greeks, appears to be but a science for boys. For it is fertile in controversy, but for the use of mankind, effete²." If we take the Cambridge scholars of the middle of the century as the first among their fellows, we see a great gulf between the lordly criticism of Bacon, and their humble, though not abject, reverence. We see the diadem of

¹ *Novum Organon*, I. 74.

² Preface, *De Augmentis*.

authority transferred even to worthy and yet worthier heads, till at last it is set up, like the regalia of some newly liberated republic, over the general council chamber of the nation assembled: and independence of judgement, and the continual progression of knowledge, is vindicated at last, for ever.

Thus after a long and hard discipline the Man learnt the meaning of the lessons which had instructed and amused the Child: learnt well their purport and their scope, and recognized the limits of their use. To scale the heavens at a leap; to make to himself a new fairy land of heaven and earth; to span all creation by the measure of his own intellectual stature; this phantasm he had pursued, while it ever was receding before him. Further and further into the regions of antiquity he had sought the land-marks of the old discoverers, and found them on the sands of an illimitable sea, whose billows were the works and wonders of his God. He could now satiate himself with the accomplished Past, and reach forward to the looming Future. He turned from the memory of his own achievements to the story of the world around him; from the blotted lines of manuscripts to the bright penmanship of Nature, from the legacy of his ancestors to his own work for posterity, from the Arts of life to Science, from its Poetry to Prose. Yet the gifts of Greece are his heirloom and inheritance for ever; no experience can depreciate, and no time obliterate their memory;

Μέγας ἐν τοῦτοις θεοῖς, οὐδὲ γηράσκει.

Demosthenes will ever be the instructor of statesmen, Plato of philosophers; Sophocles the admiration of poets, Homer the delight of all; and while Englishmen still

cherish these names, and twenty others of the race, as their study, their model, and their pleasure, we need fear no ingratitude or oblivion for the Preservers and Regenerators of Greek Literature in England.

THE END.

